

JAKOB VON UEXKÜLL'S *UMWELT* THEORY IN LITERARY ANALYSIS ON THE  
EXAMPLE OF LEONIE SWANN'S DETECTIVE STORY "THREE BAGS FULL"

Sandra Mänty  
Master's Thesis  
Supervisor Professor Eero Tarasti  
University of Helsinki  
Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies  
October 2015

Tiedekunta/Osasto - Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Faculty of Humanities		Laitos - Institution – Department Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies	
Tekijä - Författare – Author Sandra Mänty			
Työn nimi - Arbetets titel – Title JAKOB VON UEXKÜLL'S UMWELT THEORY IN LITERARY ANALYSIS ON THE EXAMPLE OF LEONIE SWANN'S DETECTIVE STORY "THREE BAGS FULL"			
Oppiaine - Läroämne – Subject Semiotics			
Työn laji - Arbetets art – Level Master's thesis	Aika - Datum – Month and year October 2015	Sivumäärä - Sidoantal – Number of pages 60	
Tiivistelmä - Referat – Abstract <p>This master's thesis with the title JAKOB VON UEXKÜLL'S <i>UMWELT</i> THEORY IN LITERARY ANALYSIS ON THE EXAMPLE OF LEONIE SWANN'S DETECTIVE STORY "THREE BAGS FULL" uses the <i>Umwelt</i> theory of Jakob von Uexküll (1864-1944) for the analysis of animals in fiction. As the text example it uses the novel "Three Bags Full" by German author Leonie Swann (*1975). The aim of the thesis is to establish a shift in the analysis of animals in fiction. Instead of treating animals as replacements for human characters or as mere symbols, a focus on animals as own entities with a real, biological exemplar is aimed at.</p> <p>The thesis starts with an introduction to the text example and its author. The text example is then placed into the literary canon. In addition it shows the signification sheep have received through literary history and demonstrates the problem that sheep have lost their animal character.</p> <p>Following field of zoosemiotics is briefly introduced as is the biologist Jakob von Uexküll. His <i>Umwelt</i> concept is subsequently explain in more detail and its application in and contribution to literary analysis presented.</p> <p>Concluding the analyses the novel "Three Bags Full" using von Uexküll's theory is conducted in order to show the real animal character of the sheep in the novel. The claim that the author deliberately chose to write about real-life animals is proven. Additionally the functionality of <i>Umwelt</i> theory to provide humans with a balanced, meaningful tool to investigate animals in art is provided.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords Animals in fiction, sheep in fiction, Umwelt theory, Jakob von Uexküll, zoosemiotics			
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited Kaisa Kirjasto			
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information			

## Table of Contents

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. SUBJECT OF ANALYSIS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.1 THE STORY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.2 THE AUTHOR</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>I.3 SIGNIFICATION OF SHEEP</b>	<b>8</b>
I.3.1 EXCURSUS – THREE LANGUAGES, THREE DIFFERENT TITLES AND COVERS	11
<b>I.4 INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE QUESTION OF GENRE</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>II ZOOSEMIOTICS AND LITERATURE</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>II.1 <i>UMWELT</i> THEORY AND ITS APPLICATION</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>II. 2 JAKOB VON UEXKÜLL</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>II.3 VON UEXKÜLL'S <i>UMWELT</i> RESEARCH</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>II. 4 <i>UMWELT</i> IN LITERATURE</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>III. ANALYSIS OF <i>UMWELT</i> IN THE NOVEL "THREE BAGS FULL"</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>III. 1 THE <i>UMWELT</i> OF THE SHEEP IN "THREE BAGS FULL"</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>III 2. THE HUMANS AND <i>UMWELT</i> OF "THREE BAGS FULL"</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>III.3 ANIMALS IN NON-NATURAL <i>UMWELTEN</i></b>	<b>41</b>
<b>III.4 DIFFERENCES AND COMMON GROUND</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>III.5 THE <i>UMWELT</i> OF DOGS</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>WORKS CITED</b>	<b>53</b>

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to professor Eero Tarasti for assessment of this thesis. My gratefulness extends to professor Hannu Riikonen for his contribution. Many thanks go to the teachers of the International Master's Programme in Semiotics of whose teaching I greatly benefited: professor Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen, the head of the programme, Merja Bauters, Massimo Berruti, Eero Tarasti, and Harri Veivo.

A special thank you goes to Irma Vierimaa, who has been a great, patient source of information and help.

Studying this programme would not have been the same without my truly excellent fellow students Pipsa Keski-Hakuni, Maria Pushkina, Juuso-Ville Gustafsson and Jarno Rantanen. For excellent co-operation for a course project I would like to thank Christian Sannemann.

There are many semioticians in and outside Finland in addition to the aforementioned teachers in the programme who have been a great inspiration and support. There are too many names to list here, but I would like to thank representative Irma Sorvali, Dario Martinelli and Sari Helkala-Koivisto.

Without the support of my family and friends studying and producing a second degree would have been impossible. I am deeply grateful to my husband without whom I would not have been able to go through these for various reasons at times disturbing study years.

Jääli, 23.10.2015

Sandra Mänty

## Introduction

When reading books in the past I often wondered how to assess and analyse animals in those books. It seems that literary animals deserve more attention by critics and researchers. Animals are according to Martinelli often referred to as “any other animal except humans” in order to emphasise the difference of humans to all other animals. Animals may also represent exclusively human characteristics therewith loosing their own ones (Martinelli, Dario 2007: *Zoosemiotics. Proposals for a handbook*. Helsinki and Imatra, *Acta Semiotica Fennica*. P. 218). To be labelled as ‘the other’, as a symbol, a decorative element or a replacement for certain human characteristics deprives animals of any active part in a story.

The motivation for this thesis was derived by the need for a tool for analysing animals in literature for what they are – animals, that is. I believe that authors, who choose to write about or use animals in their work, do it fully aware and on purpose. Hence it is my task as a researcher of literature to take the animals seriously. In addition to that Rudolf Schenda writes that the attitudes and research of humanists and proponents of the Enlightenment helped animal awareness and welfare on (Schenda, Rudolf 1995: *Das ABC der Tiere. Märchen, Mythen und Geschichten*. München, Beck. P. 7-10). As a humanist I do not only define myself as an expert in the antique artistic traditions, but as a advocate of intrinsic values embedded in any living being independent from a human point of view, and humanities responsibility to ethically and morally accept and respect these values. Humans belong to the animal kingdom and hence there should be no difference in the value of a human or a non-human animal. Since life is made of the same components the value should include other beings such as invertebrates and even plants, for instance. While encountering other than human life forms in literature humanist researchers should be aware of the often-ambiguous value system of the text that puts humans and non-human life forms in opposition. The task is to investigate how this opposition came about and study cases where other than human life forms are equal. Such a case is the focus of this master’s thesis.

The question may arise whether animals as such can really occur in literature, a very human art form. Timothy Clark asks: "Why is engaging with non-human creatures so difficult?" (Clark, Timothy 2011: *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. P. 186). He continues: "In most canonical literary texts, the place of non-human life is both pervasive but unseen. It is simply so uncontroversial as to make alternative readings centred on animals seem almost like a change of discipline. Any study of a text on the non-human always becomes a study of humanity in some sense." (Clark 2011: 187). There is not doubt that the study at hand is to some extent involved in a critical examination of humanity, but the aim is to keep the focus on animals. The question remains whether humans can ever do anything else but represent what they think animals are, because humans have yet no access to animal minds. Literature may, perhaps even should, take part in the discussion about the relation between animals and humans though, and the problem of how to share the planet among all living beings.

I argue that the literary work examined in this thesis is more about animals, specifically sheep, than it is about humans. Despite the argument that an analysis of animals turns often into an analysis of humans, this thesis focuses on the animals, because the author of the book has done so. In the novel, there are almost no relations between animals and humans. Hence there is much space for speculation about such relations and this thesis shows the case of sheep and humans.

By analysing literary animals through zoosemiotics, a field situated on the border between natural sciences and human sciences, provides the possibility to understand what humans do not necessarily understand about the environment, other species and even themselves and their own species. The focus shifts from an anthropocentric point of view to another life-form. Despite literature being a perhaps even exclusively human art form I argue that a shift away from anthropocentrism enriches the possibilities of text analysis as well as to analysing animals in the humanities in general. The reason for the need of such a shift is the regular occurrence of animals in the humanities, from the arts to anthropology, but the animals as such have so far received little attention.

The aim of this thesis is to establish a non-anthropocentric analysis of animals in literature. Instead of looking at animals as merely a replacement for human characters or just as symbols and metaphors, the preservation of the animals as such is in the focus. The reason for this approach is that it would help us as readers and researchers to better understand and analyse our relation to animals when we encounter them in literature.

In the first part of my thesis the subject of analysis, the novel “Three Bags Full” by the author Leonie Swann is introduced and the author is shortly presented as well. Following I provide a literary-cultural background of sheep, the protagonists of Swann’s novel, to shape a basis for what readers may expect when encountering sheep in a novel. During both steps the discrepancy between the stereotypical image of sheep and their appearance in the novel is evident. In chapter two the theoretical approach of *Umwelt* research is introduced and is finally used in chapter three for the analysis of the sheep in “Three Bags Full”. *Umwelt*, a German word mainly translated as environment, means the semiotic world of an organism or living being as it were. The *Umwelt* concept was chosen in order to be able to look at animals from within their own semiotic world and not from an exclusively human world.

## I. Subject of analysis

This first chapter of the thesis presents the subject to be analysed, which is a murder mystery novel by a young German author by the artist name Leonie Swann. First a summary of the story and an introduction of its main characters are given. Following I provide a short presentation of the author before I move to an overview of readers' expectations of sheep in general and in literature in particular.

### I.1 The story

Before the story even starts its main protagonists are introduced in order of appearance in a separate introductory section like a *dramatis personae* in printed versions of theatre plays or crime novels, for instance. 19 characters are introduced by names and all these characters are sheep. Most of the names are natural names, *i.e.* names like Maude, Sara, and Maisie. Other names are descriptive like The Winter Lamb or most suitable for grazing animals like Heather, Cloud, and Lane. In addition to the names there are portrayals of the characters' appearances, race and traits. The sheep with a more extensive description is called Miss Maple. From that description and her name the readers understand that Miss Maple is central to the story and certainly the intertextual link to crime fiction to which I return in section I.4. Other characters with more extensive information are the herd's lead ram Sir Ritchfield, Mopple The Whale, Zora, and Melmoth.

On the very first page of the story the readers are confronted with the death of shepherd George Glenn. His sheep found him lying in the grass with a spade stuck to his body. The sheep understand that their shepherd is dead and at the first moment they are mostly concerned with who is going to take care of the flock from now on. Only when Miss Maple, introduced as "the cleverest sheep in the flock, maybe the cleverest sheep in Glennkill, quite possibly the cleverest sheep in the

whole world" (Swann 2006: *Dramatis Oves*), wonders how George had died the sheep come to the conclusion that murder had taken place and they want to find the culprit. Justice is what the sheep demand (Swann 2006: p. 14) for both their shepherd and, ultimately, for themselves. The sheep start their investigation before the first humans turn up at the pasture and find the dead man. First Miss Maple examines George's body while other sheep look out for the humans. Once they arrive the sheep observe the humans closely and try to make sense of what they say. The author uses normal, human speech for the sheep and the humans, but there is no communication between them or between any different races. The sheep seem to understand human language to some extent because their shepherd spoke and read to them, sometimes even explaining words. On the other hand one of them, Maude, says: "It isn't easy to understand humans" (Swann 2006: 37) after a second visit of humans on the sheep's meadow. The sheep's lack of understanding what humans say creates a good part of the comic humour in the novel. The very first word, for instance, used by a human is "swine", referring to the murderer. The sheep instead wonder what a pig would have to do with the case since there has never been one on their pasture. The readers are at times as unaware as the sheep and only slowly follow them to unravel George's death. One method for the analyses of humans is exclusively the sheep's. They can smell how humans feel. This ability helps the readers to gain an insight into the persons involved in the story but may leave them uncomfortable at the same time, because of the possibility that animals may actually be able to detect human emotions. Additionally, it discloses the differences between human and animal cognition to which I will return in chapter two.

George's death does not leave the group of humans showing up first particularly sad. Only Ham, the local butcher, shows some signs of real grief. The other shepherd, Gabriel, the local loose woman, Lilly, and especially the thin man, who is actually the village's pub landlord, are not overwhelmed with sorrow. Like the sheep this group seems to be mostly concerned with their own affairs. They leave the investigation to the professionals, in this case the local police. Once the police and the press disappear the sheep collect what they have found out and two more odd incidents are revealed. George's sheepdog Tessy is missing and Miss Maple saw a hoof print on George's stomach while investigating his body. She does

not disclose this information to her flock. The sheep mainly involved in examining George's supposed murder are Miss Maple, Othello, Mopple the Whale, Zora, and to some extent Sir Ritchfield as the lead ram of the flock.

During the course of the investigation the sheep are forced to leave their pasture and explore the village. The exploits into human territory provide the sheep with insights into the various relations between people and structures of a small community's life. In addition to the group of people, who came to their pasture, George's wife Kate, the village priest, the missionary Beth, and local alcoholic Tom O'Malley are persons with connections to George, and crucial to solve the mystery around his death. The single most important human character is Rebecca, George's extramarital daughter. She appears shortly after George's death and ultimately inherits his flock.

The story culminates in a theatre performance by the sheep in the local pub with which the sheep try to reveal whom they suspect to have killed George Glenn. Unfortunately the human audience is not capable of interpreting the performance, but it still helps to finally discover that there was no murder, because a confession is made. The shepherd committed suicide and had informed one of the villagers about his plans in advance.

"Three Bags Full" is written in third-person past tense and the narrative situations are figural, which means according to Stanzel (Stanzel, Franz K. 1993: *Typische Formen des Romans*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. P. 39 ff.), that situations are seen from one character's perspective at the time. The readers do not encounter a narrator or comments of an omniscient or intrusive narrator, but characters and scenes are made plausible through demonstration. All narrative situations are told from the sheep perspective. There are no situations where the emotions and attitudes of humans are revealed else but through what they say in a dialogue and how their actions are described. This narrative strategy allows the author to put the focus on the sheep and their inner perspective without taking the role of a sheep herself. The perspective from the sheep and their relation to surroundings and events create both the comical appeal of the story and pondering on questions related to the relation between animals and humans. This point is discussed in detail in chapter three of this thesis.

## I.2 The author

In addition to the fact that the author in question is relatively unknown and perhaps requires a short introduction, I argue that the authors of novels and other literary products should not be ignored. Even though readers are free to interpret any text in their own ways, Eero Tarasti points out that while investigating a work of art “the intentions of an author cannot be eliminated as a kind of intentional fallacy” (Tarasti, Eero 2000: *Existential Semiotics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press. P. 88). Whatever readers may encounter in a novel, for example, was put there on purpose and hence should be taken into consideration as fundamental for understanding its meaning. For the investigation at hand both the education and personal attitude of the author have a considerable impact on the content and composition of the text. Without examining the author of “Three Bags Full” a great part of its appeal and message would be lost, as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

The author of “Three Bags Full” uses the pseudonym Leonie Swann. She was born 1975 in southern Germany close to Bavaria’s capitol Munich. She studied philosophy, psychology and English literature in Munich and Berlin. These subjects, especially the latter, provide the author with a sound foundation for writing. Whereas philosophy and psychology provide theories for analysing human characteristics, activities, behaviour, relations to other beings and the environment, and thought, English literature gives in addition to knowledge about its history and most important works and authors a variety of ideas. Section I.4 deals with the author’s background influencing both her choice of genre and the intertextual clues found in the novel.

In interviews Swann reported that she had the idea for her debut novel in Paris. Life in a big city made her crave country life like she had encountered on a travel to Ireland where she also met sheep for the first time. “Three Bags Full” started as simple stories about sheep before growing into a novel. It was written in Paris, Ireland, and Berlin. During the same interview in 2005 Swann claims she had the help of an expert to determine whether the actions of the sheep in her novel

are appropriate behaviour. This expert is even mentioned in the book after the story and therewith underlines the author's faithfulness to represent her sheep as animals and not a replacement for humans.

"Three Bags Full" was an unexpected and huge success for a debut. It and its successor were translated into twenty-five languages. The novel was high in the bestseller listings for several months and received a prestigious prize in Germany. Swann lives in Berlin and England, and has published her second novel "Garou", the sequel to "Three Bags Full", in 2010.

### 1.3 Signification of sheep

In this section the possible presuppositions of readers when encountering sheep in literature is investigated. The reason for establishing the readers' preconditions connected to sheep lies in the challenges the novel "Three Bags Full" may pose. The sheep in the novel seem to defy stereotypes but in order to elaborate on this assumption a look at these stereotypes is in place. Most animals represent values and bear symbolic characteristics embedded in the cultural and science history. Rudolf Schenda points out that since antiquity animals were the subject of investigation and philosophical thought (Schenda, Rudolf 1995: *Das ABC der Tiere. Märchen, Mythen und Geschichten*. München: C.H. Beck. P. 13 ff.). He refers to the traditions of bestiaries and fables quoting sources from antiquity, cabinets of curiosities, children's literature, perhaps the most important source of attitudes toward animals together with personal experience, and the more recent animal tales. Despite the fact that the common attitude toward a certain animal species may have nothing in common with the real, biological being, stereotypical images still define the expectations of the readers coupled with their personal experience. Any reader may have, of course, encountered sheep and have therefore a more varied set of attitudes and expectations. Büttner and Gottdang point out that animal symbolism is often ambiguous and not easy to define (Büttner, Frank / Gottdang, Andrea (2006): *Einführung in die Ikonographie. Wege zur Deutung von*

Bildinhalten. München, Beck. P. 131-132). This problem occurs in all art forms and any image of sheep readers may have is therefore not only rather vague but surely a composition of different sources. The iconography of sheep is rooted in Christian tradition. According to Rudolf Schenda sheep often signify innocence and they accompany saints like John the Baptist and Agnes. *Agnus dei*, God's lamb (Schenda 1995: 300)<sup>1</sup>, symbolises the faithful believer. The good shepherd guarding defenceless sheep is another well-known Christian symbol as Wolfgang Günter mentions (Günter, Wolfgang 2007: Taube, Löwe, Kreuz und Anker. Christliche Symbole und ihre Bedeutung. Wuppertal, Brockhaus. P. 84 ff.). In contrast to the positive connotations stands the folkloristic opinion of sheep as especially dumb animals or the black sheep as an outsider. This opinion may be based on fables to which I turn shortly. Although Schenda refers to the wild nature of goats and their origins, the sheep is simply not seen as a natural, non-domesticated animal. Sheep husbandry occurred for the first time around 9.000 BC<sup>2</sup> and hence sheep are close to and used by humans since centuries.

From the perspective of the history of literature and literary studies sheep occur as a picturesque and symbolic element in pastoral poems, a literary tradition born in Greece around 300 BC through the poet Theocritus and made popular through Vergil's (70BC-19BC) "Bucolica". Pastoral literature influences writers during the renaissance in Italy, Spain, England, in France and Germany during the baroque, and lastly in the German speaking area during the early classicism. Pastoral poems and related literary forms are according to Gero von Wilpert (Wilpert, Gero von 1989: Sachwörterbuch der Literatur. Stuttgart, Kröner. P. 376-377) escapes from reality into an idyllic, mythical and close to nature world of peace, tranquillity and content. It is obvious that von Wilpert does not see much value in pastoral literary works other than in their aesthetic arrangements and place in literary history. Sheep are decorative elements in pastoral poems and emphasise the function of the shepherd, the idyll of rural life and beauty of the landscape. This literary form is interesting though from a point of view that it help

---

<sup>1</sup> The Lamb of God is the only reference of sheep in the "Physiologus", an anonymous reference work on animal symbolism in Christianity. In this reference the Lamb of God carries the sins of the world (Der Physiologus. Tiere und ihre Symbolik. 2005. Köln, Anaconda. P. 22).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.schaf-foren.de/forum/index.php?act=Attach&type=post&id=125770>

to create the stereotypical image of sheep and shepherds still prevailing today to some extent. The Norton Anthology's definition of pastorals states that they project the "poet's nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting" (A 2001: The Norton Anthology of English Literature. New York and London, W. W. Norton & Company. P. 2851). Despite the fact that "Three Bags Full" is not a pastoral but it uses elements of a pastoral idyll to contrast its settings, its genre and the events unfolding in the story.

In a collection of more than eight hundred fables (Irmischer, Johannes (ed.) 2011: *Sämtliche Fabeln der Antike*. Köln, Anaconda.), there are thirty-one fables with the words sheep, lamb, buck or whether in their title and as characters in the fables. Fables are, as both Irmischer and von Wilpert point out, short narrations in prose or verse commonly commenting on a moral aspect and value. Dario Martinelli underlines that animals are often used as a reference to exclusively human characteristics (Martinelli Dario 2007: *Zoosemiotics: proposals for a handbook*. Helsinki and Imatra, Acta Semiotica Fennica XXVI. P. 218) and fables make use of exactly that.

In only seven of the thirty-one fables about sheep of the collection mentioned sheep are characterised in a positive manner. These seven fables feature smart and soulful sheep whereas the other twenty-four describe them as stupid, inconsiderate, selfish, limited, and naive. In half of the fables sheep are dependent on a shepherd and sheep dogs for protection, because unprotected they fall victim to wolves. They are also victims of human sacrifice to deities, but accept that role as victim for a good cause. The fables precede Christianity that seems to have taken on the sheep or lamb as innocent creature in need of protection and sacrificial animal. Fables are most likely at least partially the bases for common stereotypical images of sheep and other animals

There are two cases in popular culture noted for breaking with the stereotypical sheep. In children's popular culture sheep made an entry in 2007 in the British television series "Shaun the sheep" of 140 episodes by Aardman

Animation shown on CBBC. The sheep in the series are in opposition to their literary ancestor very active and inquisitive. They move between the stereotypical image of the dull, constantly eating sheep and a clever, valuable type of animal. Shaun and his herd, of which only a few are given names and a distinctive character, are both inventive, sly and funny as well as dull, clumsy and opportunistic. The 2006 horror comedy movie “Black Sheep” directed by Jonathan King in New Zealand is another example of a genre that is perhaps not expected to feature sheep as the evil, vicious creatures posing a threat to humans.

To return to the possibility of readers’ personal experience with sheep and the perspective of cultural history there are currently ca. 2,7 million sheep in Germany, 3,5 million in Ireland as of December 2013, and in 135.500 Finland.<sup>3</sup> In comparison to the expanse of the countries Ireland has the biggest number of sheep. Whereas sheep husbandry is a valid line of business in Ireland, it has much less commercial value in Germany or Finland. In the latter countries sheep are nowadays mainly used in landscape conservation. In these countries sheep are much less used for products such as skin, milk and meat than pigs and cattle. In this respect sheep retain their rural, Arcadian idyll evoked in Christian iconography and pastoral poems. On the other hand, there are just not very prominent in everyday life. This would explain why the author Leonie Swann has encountered sheep for the first time not in her native country Germany but in Ireland, a popular travel destination with Germans.

### 1.3.1 Excursus – three languages, three different titles and covers

The reason for this short excursus is that book titles influence the readers’ decision to read and possible buy a certain book. Since the main characters of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Germany: <https://www.nabu.de/umwelt-und-ressourcen/oekologisch-leben/essen-und-trinken/07851.html>

Ireland:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/animalidentificationandmovement/NationalSheepGoatCensus2013140514.pdf>

Finland: <http://elaintenhyvinvointikeskus.azurewebsites.net/lajit-complete-info/lammas/lammas-tuotantoelaeimena.aspx>

story are animals, it may make a difference whether they are in any way mentioned or made visible on the cover. The original German title of Swann's debut novel is "Glennkill" and its subtitle "Ein Schafskrimi ("A sheep detective story"). The readers therefore know immediately that somehow sheep are involved in the story. One can only guess why the publisher changed the original title. Presumably the playful use of "Glenn" as a name deriving from the Scottish word "glen", meaning a valley or gorge, and "kill" indicating what happened to that name does not appeal to an English speaking audience. The English title "Three Bags Full" does not refer to sheep and its subtitle "A sheep detective story" is not printed on the front cover of the paperback but on the title page. The Finnish version is translated as "Murha laitumella" ("Murder on the pasture", my translation) and the subtitle "Lammasdekkari" (A sheep detective story", my translation) is found on the title page of the paperback as well. The Finnish title indicates a murder scene on the pasture, but that is not the case in the story. Readers are therefore somewhat misled by the title.

The German and Finnish versions have the same illustration on their covers. They show a white sheep on grass green ground on the upper third and the much larger black and distorted shadow of the sheep on dark green ground on the lower two third of the cover. The illustration evokes a sense of mystery around sheep and creates the suspense between the stereotypical innocent white sheep and the sinister black exemplar. There is no reference to humans or a human environment.

The English version on the other hand has a black cover on which there is a head of a white sheep in the lower left corner and on top of it in a white doorframe the silhouette of a shepherd recognisable through the shepherd's staff. The figure cast a long, black shadow on white ground all the way to the down right corner of the cover behind parts of the sheep's head and left ear. This cover draws the attention to the human world and does not reserve the place in the limelight for the sheep. Together with the title "Three Bags Full" the reference to sheep is weak and the focus is put on the shepherd, who seems to pose a threat. Both title and cover illustration do not link with the most important issues in the story, the sheep and the flaws of the human world and society.

#### I.4 Intertextuality and the question of genre

The author Leonie Swann was not only introduced in this thesis because she is relatively unknown but also because her education and background are visible in her novel. In my opinion it is possible to read any text without knowledge of its author and readers may interpret the texts in any way they deem suitable. On the other hand, a more in-depth analysis of a text is only possible when examining its background including the person or persons, who produced it. The author's intention may well be the key to the whole text and in the case at hand I argue that the role of the author is crucial. Not only did she choose sheep as her main protagonists instead of humans or any other animals, but also the names of the sheep were carefully chosen. Intertextuality, the reference to other literary or any other texts or pictorial arts (see Wilpert 1998: 417), is mainly but not only expressed through these names. Another intertextual link is the title of the novel in German and Finnish. Both create a connection to the genre by adding a subtitle that refers to murder mysteries. The English title remains vague and invites the potential reader to refer to the blurb to find out more about the story. A particular name of one of the sheep ties "Three Bags Full" even closer to the genre of murder mystery. One of the – if not the - main characters is called Ms. Maple. The name certainly evokes Agatha Christie's (1890-1976) famous heroine Ms. Marple, the main character of 12 of Christie's crime novels and 20 short stories. It is rather adequate that Ms. Marple is the template for a sheep because Agatha Christie herself apparently has said, "I chiefly associate her [Ms. Marple] with fluffy wool" (Morgan, Janet 1984: Agatha Christie. A Biography. London, Collins. P. 177). It comes as no surprise then that Miss Marple is always carrying knitting needles with her. In addition to the name and the reference to wool the sheep Ms. Maple seems to be a spinster like her human alias. It is never mentioned that she would have had lambs whereas all other females are ewes. The title 'Miss' emphasise the lack of family ties. Miss Maple does not seem to have a first name unlike Miss Jane Marple. Also the lives both characters lead are astonishingly alike. On the official Agatha Christie website of Agatha Christie Limited with contributions by unstated

authors of the Christie Archive Trust it is written that: "Miss Jane Marple doesn't look like your average detective. Quite frankly, she doesn't look like a detective at all. But looks can be deceiving... For a woman who has spent her life in the small village of St Mary Mead, Miss Marple is surprisingly worldly. But as she often points out she has had every opportunity to observe human nature."<sup>4</sup> Nobody would expect the sheep Ms. Maple being both clever and a detective, and one would not expect her to have had neither the opportunity to observe human nature on her pasture nor, in fact, the ability to do that. The readers of "Three Bags Full" find out soon enough that the pasture is situated close to the village of Glennkill but the villagers do not seem to come out to the pasture very often. However, the sheep do observe and get impressions of humans, especially the inhabitants in the village, but they are far from being worldly. A quote from Christie's novel "The Blood-Stained Pavement", which is put on the official Miss Marple page too, suits the case of Glennkill and its inhabitants remarkably well: "There is a great deal of wickedness in village life." The beautiful surroundings including the sheep on their pasture, the small village in its remote location, and the typical villagers all look picture perfect, but the truth underneath the surface is much darker.

The structure of the novel "Three Bags Full" is the one of a crime story as Peter Nusser elaborated (Nusser, Peter (1992: Der Kriminalroman. Stuttgart, Metzler. P. 26ff.). The first part sees the occurrence of a murder, the second the investigation, and the third part finally the solution of the murder case. The emphasis is put on the middle part where the detective analyses the case and often struggles toward its solution. It is in this part where most of the crime story's suspense is built up. The solution is based on observation and deduction. I shall return to the question of the sheep's ability to observe and conclude later on when investigating their relation to their *Umwelt*.

Nusser's remarks on the location of crime stories fit "Three Bags Full" perfectly (Nusser 1992: 49-51). The rural idyll of Glennkill confuses the readers because it is just a backdrop for human characteristics and actions instead of a

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.agathachristie.com/christies-work/detectives/miss-marple/3>

paradise. An introduction of the characters is found in some editions of Christie's work, for example in "What Mrs. McGillicuddy saw" (Christie, Agatha 1958: What Mrs. McGillicuddy Saw. New York, Pocket Books. (British title "4:50 from Paddington")<sup>5</sup>, and is also found in "Three Bags Full" as *Dramatis Oves*.

According to Peter Nusser the detective Miss Marple is not at all as aloof as a Sherlock Holmes for example, but to a degree odd and different from the average person in habits and manners (Nusser 1992: 101-102). On the contrary to Nusser's observation that Christie's stories are set in the rural English middle class of and anchored in its organizing principles, "Three Bags Full" is set in rural Ireland where the villagers represent a rural working class of farmers, craftsmen, small business owners, clerks and lower clergymen. A common figure in both Christie and Swann is the vicar, and in both cases he is not necessarily the person the readers would expect him to be. I will return to Swann's vicar in part two of this thesis. The rural setting of Christie and Swann's novels is deceptive. Instead of pastoral idyll the readers find remarkable tensions between people leading to the obligatory murder case to solve for the detective. Whereas authors like Christie re-establishes the idyll at the end of a solved case as Nusser points out (Nusser 19:), Swann's remains fragile mainly because there was no case to be solved and the tensions remain. Both female detectives Miss Marple and Miss Maple are purposefully imperfect to make it easier for readers to identify with them. Especially in the case of Miss Maple her flaws make her easier to approach. Since she is an animal it would estrange her from the readers if she were superhuman like Sherlock Holmes.

Agatha Christie may not only have served as a model of crime novel writer for Leonie Swann, but perhaps her affection for animals was just as important. Morgan writes that Christie had strong sympathy for animals since her childhood and that it went deeper than just caring for pets (Morgan 198: 192-193). For Christie animals have individual characters like humans, feelings, and a secret knowledge that is expressed through their behaviour. Leonie Swann may well have

---

<sup>5</sup> This American edition has an introduction of characters whereas the English edition of has not. Another edition for language learners available at an online selling place again had the introduction: [http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0007451725?keywords=450%20from%20paddington&qid=1440673284&ref=sr\\_1\\_4&s=books&sr=1-4#reader\\_0007451725](http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0007451725?keywords=450%20from%20paddington&qid=1440673284&ref=sr_1_4&s=books&sr=1-4#reader_0007451725)

honoured Agatha Christie's attitude toward animals by calling one of her novel's main characters Miss Maple. The intertextuality is hence not only found in reference to Christie's oeuvre but to her very person creating various levels of reference. Tarasti again points out that an analysis of a work of art without its social context and appearance is insufficient (Tarasti 2000: 88). The intertextuality pointed out in this section supports my assumption that the author Swann has gone to great length to write a crime story from an animal perspective and about animals instead of covering an anthropocentric core.

There are two connections to crime fiction that are not expressed with names. One is the subtitle "A sheep detective story" that establishes both the genre and is the first step of creating the contrasting juxtaposition between the genre and sheep as detectives. Swann weaves in another small reference to crime fiction by describing one of the more prominent human characters in "Three Bags Full" first as 'a thin man', therewith bearing on the famous 1934 novel by Dashiell Hammet.

Swann embeds other literature than crime fiction in her own novel. An obvious bow to one of the greatest - if not the greatest of all time - names in English literature William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is Othello, a black ram with four horns. Othello is fearless, strong, but he is also kind and respectful. Of all the flock Othello has made most experiences with a variety of humans and not only the shepherd. Therefore, he is the link between the human and the animal world. Othello's mysterious past, his look, strengths, and at times lack of control endow him with a mystic terror. Like his Shakespearean model described in a reference guide by Evangeline O'Connor (Connor, Evangeline 1996: *Who's Who And What's What In Shakespeare*. New York and Avenel, Gramercy Books. P. 255.) he struggles to control his passion, in this case for freedom, and suffers from injustice and deceit. His character carries most of the anticipation and criticism of humans.

Another name based on a literary character is Melmoth. "Melmoth the Wanderer" is a Gothic novel by Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824) published in 1820. In the novel Melmoth is both the last name of the family and a dubious character, who is both an ancestor of the family and a scholar selling his soul to the devil. Melmoth the sheep, too, is a truly gothic character, who is very different from the other sheep of his herd. The twin brother of Sir Ritchfield, Melmoth is the only

sheep ever to have left the herd to live much like a wanderer, solitary and homeless. He looks shaggy, speaks in riddles and is accompanied by two crows reminiscent of the two ravens of the Norse god Odin, who is the god of war, wisdom, and magic. Melmoth's characteristics do not meet the stereotypical image of sheep, because Melmoth is independent, wise and not at all in need of protection. The sheep character Melmoth is less gloomy than his human counterpart but shares his homelessness. In "Three Bags Full" Melmoth takes the place of the wise scholar, who is most essential for the development of the character of Othello.

Interestingly, Charles Maturin was the great-uncle of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) through marriage. Wilde used the pseudonym Sebastian Melmoth in 1897, according to the Oscar Wilde Society, after he was released from prison and moved to France. Melmoth, therefore, refers to both Maturin's poem and Wilde, showing Swann's skills in linking her novel with a vast history of British literature from the Elizabethan era to the Victorian period.

The last name with an intertextual link is Zora, a female sheep that is an especially dexterous climber and deep thinker. Her name derives from the popular youth novel "Die rote Zora und ihre Bande" ("The outsiders of Uskoken Castle", translated by Lynn Aubrey) from 1941 by Kurt Held, the pseudonym for Kurt Kläber (1897-1959). An adaptation for television from 1979 was very popular in Germany and Swann may have encountered Zora on television during her childhood. Susanne Gaschke points out that many children admire the heroine Zora for her independence and freedom (Gaschke, Susanne 2002: Hexen, Hobbits und Piraten. Die besten Bücher für Kinder. Stuttgart/München, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: p. 234) and this may well be the case for Leonie Swann as well, who uses the name Zora to immortalize a heroine of her reading experience in her own work. Her Zora is independent and courageous, and her pondering is essential for the herd's success of solving the mystery around George's death. Among the aforementioned giants of British literature Zora is a refreshing intertextual reference paying children's literature the deserved attention.

The ultimate intertextuality is found in the fact that both shepherds, George Glenn and after his passing his daughter Rebecca, read to the sheep. George's choice of reading material is rather limited. He has books on sheep keeping and

health, and apparently loves stories in form of penny dreadful. From this reading the sheep gain knowledge about their own needs and human affairs. Rebecca's choice is different from her father's. The readers know she lived in Dublin and may have a better education than her father received in a small village in the countryside. Rebecca reads Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights", which can be deducted by the depiction of the story and the name Heathcliff, and she promises the sheep that bother her to read "The silence of the lambs", a horror-crime novel by Thomas Harris from 1988, perhaps better known as a movie, to them. Swann's idea of reading novels and other literary works to animals to such an effect that they may learn from them is both hilarious and fascinating. For this investigation the act of reading to animals belongs to their perception of *Umwelt* and human nature. It is discussed in chapter three.

In the first part of this thesis the subject of investigation, the novel "Three Bags Full", its characters and author were introduced. The intertextual traits of characters and their names were revealed and a stereotypical image of sheep was drawn. Readers' expectations connected to genre were discussed. As the analysis of sheep in literature presented in this chapter has shown, the focus is not on sheep as biological, real animals but on sheep as a replacement for certain human characteristics like in fables or part of a certain imagination like the pastoral idyll. To narrow down on the animal itself I introduce in chapter two the theory used for the analysis of animal worlds before I move on to use it for the novel's analysis in chapter three.

## II Zoosemiotics and literature

This chapter introduces theory from a biology background that is taken into use for literary analysis of the example text in chapter three. The reason for using a non-literary approach is to be able to unload the animals from prevailing stereotypes and expectations discussed in chapter one.

Zoosemiotics, a term invented by Thomas A. Sebeok (1920-2001) in 1963, is a discipline “devoted to the scientific study of signalling behaviour in and across animal species” (Sebeok, Thomas A. 1972: *Perspectives in Zoosemiotics*. The Hague and Paris, Mouton. P. 178). It was developed further as “the study of animal semiosis, communication and representation” (Cobley, Paul (ed.) 2010: *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*. London and New York, Routledge. P. 357). Winfried Nöth defines zoosemiotics as the study of sign usage in animals (Nöth, Winfried 2000: *Handbuch der Semiotik*. Stuttgart und Weimar, Metzler. P. 260). He points out that zoosemiotics does not only examine the specific traits of semiosis in animals in opposite to humans, but additionally demonstrates that zoosemiosis is in some cases superior to human semiosis. The discipline zoosemiotics is therefore adequate to study animals on an equal basis and does not make them inferior beings compared to humans.

Zoosemiotics is aware of the problem of humans studying animals and the risk of wrong interpretation. Sebeok states that a human observing animal communication for instance becomes a cryptanalyst, who is neither the receiver of the message he observes nor does he have the code transformation rules (Sebeok, Thomas 1975: *Zoosemiotics: At the Intersection of Nature and Culture*. The Peter De Ridder Press, Lisse. P. 6). Sebeok continues that despite great efforts “none of the several million codes still in use is entirely understood by man” (Sebeok 1975: 7). These codes are so rich and varied that they do not open up easily to those unfamiliar with them. Both biased presuppositions and misinterpretations of animal communication and behaviour may influence the result of examinations too. Also Thure von Uexküll (1908-2004), son of Jakob von Uexküll, who is

introduced in the next section, emphasises the need for awareness all the time by the human observer of the fact that she or he interprets experiences of the observed animal that a human cannot make (Uexküll, Jakob von, Kriszat, Georg 1970: Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen & Bedeutungslehre. Frankfurt, Fischer. P. XXX). Here the scientist and the artist are very close to each other. Both observe, interpret and to a greater or lesser degree add a personal touch to the outcome of their observation. I will return to this point in section II.3.

Sebeok points out that “every type of sign thus analyzed has been found to occur in the animal kingdom as well as in human affairs” (Sebeok 1975: 8) making it therefore easier to approach animals in literature as natural animals, because they are perfectly capable of semiosis albeit in a different *Umwelt* than most humans are used to and additionally the investigation of animals in art puts authors and readers into the place of the puzzled observing scientist. Zoosemiotics seeks to be used in the human sciences as the editors of “Readings in Zoosemiotics” point out in their introduction to the book (Maran, Timo et al. eds 2011: Readings in Zoosemiotics. Berlin and Boston, De Gruyter Mouton). Its holistic approach of incorporating observations from natural sciences and investigations of representation from the humanities renders it certainly suitable.

## II.1 *Umwelt* theory and its application

In this section first the developer of the *Umwelt* concept Jakob von Uexküll is introduced before the concept itself is exemplified. After the introduction of *Umwelt* its possibilities for literary analysis are investigated. Von Uexküll is nowadays considered a zoosemiotician despite the appearance of the term after his death. His interest in animal perception and communication is self-evident in the *Umwelt* concept he developed. He saw how organisms created their own subjective *Umwelt* instead of such filling an environmental niche that caters to their needs. His investigations and analyses are the initial of a semiotic approach in biology (Cobley 2010: 347).

## II. 2 Jakob von Uexküll

The biologist Jakob Johann von Uexküll was born to a Baltic-German nobility family in 1864 in Keblaste, now Mihkli, Estonia. He had first a Russian nationality and later applied and received the German citizenship. He studied zoology at the University of Tartu and worked after his studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and the Zoological Station in Naples, Italy. His research shifted from muscular physiology to perception and behavioural studies.

From 1925 to 1939 when he retired von Uexküll worked at the University of Hamburg, Germany, where he was the director and founder of the Institut für Umweltforschung (direct translation: institute for environmental research, but it did not mean ecology in the sense of how it is used today) from 1927 to 1939. The institute was host to a variety of biologists, among others the behavioural scientist Konrad Lorenz, and seminars on natural philosophy and cognitive science were held. In 1959 the institute was closed but an archive of its library and von Uexküll works still exists up to today at the University of Hamburg.

The training of guide dogs was a very practical part of von Uexküll's work and his *Umwelt* concept. He developed a method together with Emanuel Sarris where the integration of objects of a human environment into the dog's environment helps the dog to guide its human partner safely.

In 1993 the Uexküll Centre opened in Tartu, Estonia, where von Uexküll studied zoology from 1884-89. The centre continues investigation on von Uexküll's line. The university of Tartu is one of the most important centres of semiotics in Europe and many semioticians, especially biosemioticians, have worked in Tartu. Today Kalevi Kull (\*1952) is a biologist and semiotician working with von Uexküll's theories at Tartu. The founder of zoosemiotics, the study of animal semiosis, communication and representation, Thomas A. Sebeok (1920-2001) brought von Uexküll back to attention and was highly influenced by his work as well.

Von Uexküll died in 1944 on the island of Capri, Italy.

### II.3 Von Uexküll's *Umwelt* research

The English translation for the German word *Umwelt* is environment – or ambience depending on the context – and is in everyday life mostly understood as “the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>). The Oxford online dictionary provides another definition more suitable for my purpose: “the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates”. Jakob von Uexküll used the term in 1909 for the first time to name the self-centred world of an organism. The term organism allows its user to include any form of life and is less limiting than the Oxford dictionary entry, for instance. Sometimes *Umwelt* is referred to as “subjective universe” or “semiotic world of organisms” (Martinelli 2010: 279). I prefer the latter because the term ‘universe’ seems to me problematic based on its more psychological meaning and scale. What *Umwelt* in the Uexküllian sense does not mean is environmental niche, habitat or environment (Martinelli 2010: 280), because it has always an organism at its centre that makes sense of it and shapes it through its own relation to its *Umwelt*.

There are two major points in von Uexküll's definition that are attractive for cultural research as well. The first point is that according to von Uexküll organisms are active subjects with abilities to integrate themselves into complex environments. The second point refers to the world or environment of an organism being perceived according to the organism's design, activity, needs, etc. The individual organism is always actively creating its *Umwelt* and not only perceiving. Therefore each organism's *Umwelt* is unique even though some features are shared with members of the same species or other organisms with similar design, needs, etc. Here is the difference to environment that is always the same for every organism. *Umwelt* theory allows both common and individual traits in organisms' perception and function, and additionally does not consider certain species as dominant over others, which is a crucial point for the research of

literature as well. I will return to this point in the following section about *Umwelt* in literature.

To explain the differences in *Umwelten*, the plural of *Umwelt*, von Uexküll uses the example of a stem of a blooming meadow-flower that occurs in the environment. The very same object has very different meanings for a human child picking flowers to make a bunch, for an ant searching for an ideal pathway to a food source, a cicada-larva using the sap of the stem for constructing itself a shelter, and finally for a cow eating the whole flower. One thing, the stem of a meadow-flower, becomes four different objects: decoration, a path, an extraction point for material, or food (Martinelli 2010: 26).

Responsible for the creation of *Umwelt* is the functional cycle (*Funktionskreis*). This cycle consists of sensory and action processes that can work combined or separate. This cycle illustrates the interrelationship between the organism as subject and objects in its *Umwelt*, and the reciprocal effects between organism and object. Object here means those signs of a thing that are important to the perceiving and acting subject (Nöth 2000: 256). As it is a cycle it explains how sensing and actions are equal parts of any function. The functional cycle make the organism's active shaping of its environment visible and explains on such examples as the above how different *Umwelt* and its perception are for different species. The stem of a meadow-flower is part of different functional cycles, for example the functional cycle of movement or foraging.

An organism constructs its *Umwelt* as a result of a *Merkwelt* and a *Wirkwelt* (Martinelli 2010: 279). The *Merkwelt* is the perception world connected to the sensory processes of the functional cycle and *Wirkwelt* the effect or operational world (Cobley 2010: 348) of action processes. The German verb *merken* means to perceive and realise whereas *wirken* means to act, function or operate. The perception organs of an organism react to certain stimuli from outside that carry meaning. Perceiving is not just a habitual process but includes anticipation (Kull 2010: 47). The effect organs then trigger the suitable reactions to the various stimuli. Perception organs and effect organs are part of the inner world (*Innenwelt*) of an organism where the outer world is represented in the organism's sign system. *Umwelt* and *Innenwelt* form an ecologic and cognitive cycle, according

to Nöth (Nöth 2000: 256), because of the anticipation formed in the inner world as a cognitive model of the subjective *Umwelt*. An object may exhibit several meanings for an organism. It is both the carrier of the perception-mark guiding the organism's perception and it is carrier of effect-marks that trigger the organism's actions. An organism may be linked to an object with multiple functional cycles that shape the various layers of its *Umwelt* (Uexküll 2010: 49-50). Objects can hence have several meanings for an organism that are linked with its habits but the possibility of change of meaning and therefore habits dependent on the circumstances occurs as well, as Uexküll points out (Uexküll 1980: 278). The success of semiosis, the meaning-making sign processes and reaction of the functional cycle, is key to the organism's achievements. No organism can exist outside of its *Umwelt* because then everything would be meaningless to it, *i.e.* sign processes would have stopped. Without sign processes there is no life.

Von Uexküll clarifies the equal worth of any *Umwelt* on the example of a tick, an animal not commonly a popular figure with humans. However, as a living organism the tick is just as apt at constructing and using its own *Umwelt* as any other animal, even of a much more complex design. For the tick's *Umwelt* only three features, in this case three stimuli from a mammals body, and three effect marks that enable the tick to perform what is needed to produce an offspring. Despite the lack of richness of the tick's *Umwelt* von Uexküll claims that its poverty is central to the success of the tick (Uexküll 2010:51). Hence richness or complexity of its *Umwelt* is not necessarily the key to an organism's well-being and thriving.

Von Uexküll's functional cycle is called semiosis by semioticians like the former mentioned Kull (Cobley 2010: 348). Semiosis is the action of signs or in other words a process where something is a sign to some organism (Cobley 2010: 318).

To sum up the important contribution of von Uexküll for the analysis of animals I use Dorion Sagan's apt summary of von Uexküll's work in his introduction to the American publication of "A foray into the worlds of animals and humans" (Uexküll 2010: 3):

“Uexküll sees organisms’ perceptions, communications, and purposeful behaviors as part of the purpose and sensations of a nature that is not limited to human beings. Uexküll’s conviction that nonhuman perceptions must be accounted for in any biology worthy of the name, combined with his specific speculations about the actual nature of the inner worlds of such nonhuman beings, is a welcome tonic against the view that nonhumans are machine-like and senseless”.

Arguably this quote that von Uexküll’s work is suitable for human sciences as well whenever they engage with the analysis of animals in art, culture or social history, for example.

## II. 4 *Umwelt* in literature

There are two main reasons why *Umwelt* is deemed appropriate for the use in literary analysis. The concept of *Umwelt* is broader than that of adaptation because it gives the organism an active part in shaping its environment into its *Umwelt* instead of just adapting to changing circumstances. *Umwelt* theory accepts that *Umwelt* is fashioned according to each organism’s abilities and needs, and therefore it does not give one species dominance over another. This way various characters of a text can be analysed on an equal basis independent of what and who they are. Even though one species or individual organisms may be described in a text as dominant, the concept of *Umwelt* will enable the analysis to be neutral and balanced. Von Uexküll wrote: “All animal subjects, from the simplest to the most complex, are inserted into their environments to the same degree of perfection. The simple animal has a simple environment; the multiform animal has an environment just as richly articulated as it is” (Uexküll 2010: 50). The adjective ‘simple’ is not to be loaded with negative connotations, but refers to the composition of the organism. It is hence possible to analyse animals’ semiotic processes in their *Umwelten* as equal to any other organism and exclude the notion of the animals as inferior to humans. To make this clear, every human exists in her or his own *Umwelt* that is unknown to everybody else. Von Uexküll writes that a biologist denies the existence of a general world stage (Uexküll: 306). There are only *Umwelten* and they are different for each and every subject despite some undisputed common features. The biologist and indeed readers of fiction embark on an expedition to explore and understand another subject’s *Umwelt*. The

similarity between functional cycles in the *Umwelten* of animals and humans is illustrated by von Uexküll on the example of sexual attraction. Each subject as the master of its own *Umwelt* is the receiver of meaning and assigns the role of meaningful object to the partner. At the same time the subject is the sender of meaning, the object, in its partner's *Umwelt* (Uexküll: 284-285). Perhaps this example lacks the factor of romance but it makes clear that only an object perceived as sending meaning will have an existence in a subject's *Umwelt* at all.

In fiction as in the real world<sup>6</sup> there are both environments and *Umwelten*. An author or the authorial voice may describe a physical environment that is the same for both the readers and the characters in the text. Each character will experience her or his *Umwelt* according to her or his designs and needs. In addition to that the readers will add their interpretation of the *Umwelten*. It may be challenging for the readers to understand the semiosis and the resulting *Umwelt* of individuals, especially if they are members of different species. The effort is rewarded with a deeper understanding of what share of the living space and ultimately the power structure each organism possesses. In fiction there is often a power struggle between both species and individuals, and the question arises who is the one sharing space and distributing the right of participation. The fiction example of this thesis will shed a light on sharing of and participation in various *Umwelten* in fiction. The following chapter three illustrates the challenges and beauty of perceiving the environment as the *Umwelt* of sheep.

---

<sup>6</sup> As Tarasti underlines one cannot be content with analyzing a work of art without taking the reality that was part in its creation and that becomes perceptible in the sign system of the work (Tarasti 2000: 88).

### III. Analysis of *Umwelt* in the novel “Three Bags Full”

In this chapter the concept of *Umwelt* is put into use in literary analysis on the example of the novel “Three Bags Full”. A contrast of different *Umwelten* of the main characters, the sheep, and the semiosis taking form in them and the resulting challenges for the readers are both presented and analysed. A quote of Stephen Crane’s, an American author and journalist, who lived in England for some time, “Tales of Adventure” between the *Dramatis Oves* and the first page of the actual story already underlines the author’s intention to display her sheep characters as free of will, determined and independent: “The trail wound here and there as the sheep had willed in the making of it” (Swann 2006). The quote exemplifies a case of the sheep acting in their *Umwelt* to gain access to food and perhaps shelter. The trail enables them to forage and find suitable places of protection from both the elements and predators. This one sentence opens a world of an animal virtually independent from human and endowed with a mind to act.

The sheep deserve special attention because the author Leonie Swann made them the absolute main characters and contradicts the stereotypical image of sheep by putting them in a detective story. In addition to the sheep as main characters and the story being told from their perspective, the focus on the sheep is emphasised by the author’s plea at the end of the book in “A Note of Warning” (Swann 2006: 352) when the story is finished not to give alcohol to real, living sheep and her gratefulness to a sheep expert from the Leenane Sheep & Wool Centre, Connemara, Ireland. With the plea and the acknowledgement Swann ties her literary sheep to their real-life example, and underlines her effort in creating a story around real animals despite the obvious artistic licence. To emphasise the reality of sheep Swann uses real sheep breeds such as Hebridean, Merino and Cladoir (Swann 2006: 264-265) but most of the humans in her own story are not interested in neither individual characteristics of sheep nor their breeds. The readers are faced with this form of anthropocentric ignorance in order to think about their own positioning and in addition readers are invited to ponder the

distance human life has taken from the world of animals and nature in general. “Three Bags Full” was awarded the German PETA Progress-Award in 2008 for the most animal-friendly book<sup>7</sup>. The award is presented to individuals and companies representing a sense of responsibility, creativity, and compassion in animal matters, therewith promoting a more humane life style. The reasons why “Three Bags Full” was chosen are that the novel displays animals as individuals with feelings and that it endows them with the right to a self-determined life. The reasons why sheep may be challenging to identify with are the stereotypes and the fact that sheep are productive livestock, and hence less close to humans as pets, for instance. As Erica Fudge writes about the “inability to draw a line between what is pet and what is food” (Fudge, Erica 2002: Animal. London, Reaktion Books. P. 35). She continues later on in her chapter on meat production and animal experiments that when eating meat “it can remind us that what lies behind the Sunday roast is a real, living, breathing animal” (Fudge 2002: 36). To put this observation into the *Umwelt* perception of human, the sheep in a meadow is a different object in a human’s *Umwelt* than the mutton on the plate (see Fudge 2002: 37). The signs of the living animal are virtually erased in the piece of meat. This is very much in line with Martinelli’s eleven categories of animal-human interaction based on Sebeok’s work (Martinelli 2007: 225-226). If the animal is perceived as commodity to fulfil human needs, such as hunger or appetite, clothing, and comfort, then humans are predators or parasites of animals. This point is taken up in section III. 4.

Unfortunately most of the critics of “Three Bags Full” did not take the opportunity to read the novel as a non-anthropocentric view on animal-human relations, but reviewed the book as somewhat funny but rather trivial<sup>8</sup>. Some critics caught on the intertextuality of Swann’s debut but none really tried a critical non-anthropocentric approach. It is perhaps the genre that prevents a more varied and profound review or there is a lack of critical culture that would pay attention to animals in literature. This chapter aims at establishing a more concerned approach to animals in literature.

---

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.peta.de/progressawards2008#.Vhdj\\_KQ4Efp](http://www.peta.de/progressawards2008#.Vhdj_KQ4Efp)

<sup>8</sup> Reviews of this kind can be found online for example at: <https://www.perlentaucher.de/buch/leonie-swann/glennkill.html>

### III. 1 The *Umwelt* of the sheep in “Three Bags Full”

Despite the third person narrator the readers of “Three Bags Full” are given a sheep perspective as mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis. The events of the story, the environment, sentiments, thoughts, and the philosophy of life are all seen from the standpoint of the sheep. The perspective only changes between the individual sheep characters. Hence the readers face some challenges of understanding both the events and the worlds of sheep, the *Umwelt* they relate to and act in. It is made clear quite early in the novel that the *Umwelt* of a human is just as strange to other organisms as their *Umwelten* are to humans. The author writes with the voice of Melmoth: If you want to know what the Two-Legs know, you have to stop and think what they don’t know. All that matters to them is what they can see with their eyes. They don’t know more than we do, they know less, that’s why it’s so difficult to understand them...” (Swann 2006: 62). This quote suggests that humans are trapped in their own *Umwelt* and therefore unable to neither understand other humans nor other animals. One of the handicaps besides their self-centredness is the human lack of using all senses equally. What is not visible is much harder for them to perceive and therewith harder to attach meaning to. Reactions and dialogues of human characters in the novel reveal their attitudes, relationships, and demeanours, but the readers are drawn to interpret characters and situations on both the same information and knowledge level as the sheep, and their anthropocentric point of view. Naturally, the readers would assume that humans understand human issues better, but when they find themselves in a sheep *Umwelt* they need to rethink the signification of objects formerly represented though different signs. The following example illustrates the difference between meaning of objects in *Umwelten* of sheep and humans.

When one of the sheep finds a so far unknown object, a ‘Thing’ as the sheep call it, and wants to keep it because she thinks it is beautiful to look at, the herd’s lead ram Sir Ritchfield explains why it is useless for sheep to have such a ‘Thing’: “You can always look at everything really beautiful. The sky. The grass. The cloud-sheep. You can catch the scent of lambs. See sunlight falling on fleece. Those are the important things. You can’t have them” (Swann 2006: 89). A little later he

continues: “You can only have what’s alive. A lamb, a flock. If you have something, it has you. If it’s alive and it’s a sheep, that’s good. Sheep are meant to have each other” (Swann 2006: 89). Despite the obvious philosophical quality of the quotes, there is something fundamental about the *Umwelt* of sheep in it as well. All that is really important as an object in a sheep *Umwelt* is other sheep, and all that is connected to the sheep’s physical wee-being, like food, shelter, and the like. What is most important is organic matter, objects that are alive. A thing is something without a name because it is an object that does not carry any meaning for the sheep. It should simply not exist in a sheep’s *Umwelt*, but in this example one sheep took interest in it anyway. Animals exhibit curiosity and examine objects that are meaning- and functionless for them. Animals also exhibit play and may use otherwise meaningless objects for play like dogs for example use balls.<sup>9</sup> The example in question deals with a different matter, namely possession and the lack to recognise what is a really meaningful object. The contrast to humans as described by the author is evident. They strive for wealth usually expressed through possession and do not understand that their relations to other humans would be the more important functional cycle. The author lets the missionary, Beth, express what is wrong with the humans of her village: “Money is all they can think of” (Swann 2006: 145).

Already at the very start of the novel in its second sentence there is the setting for the sheep part of the world: “He was healthy yesterday, said Maude. Her ears twitched nervously” (Swann 2006: 11). The animal is twitching its ears, an ability humans do not have, but understand that animals are able to use their ears to express certain emotional states. Maude’s ears are both perception organs to engage with her *Umwelt* and signalling devices to send messages to her flock. There are several instances in the text where the readers are reminded of the differences of animals acting in their *Umwelt* to signs and stimuli, for example when Zora locks out for the lost Mopple “tail wagging restlessly” (Swann 2006: 75) to again indicate nervousness. Not only will such examples help the readers to build a life-like image of sheep in their minds while reading the novel, they also allow understanding how sheep interpret their *Umwelt*. The dead shepherd and a

---

<sup>9</sup> On the semiotics of play see Martinelli 2007: 53-64.

missing sheep are both meaningful objects. The shepherd has changed his known state of living to being dead, indicating that something has happened and triggering the sheep's anticipation of change in their lives. In the case of Mopple's and other sheep's disappearance the meaningful object was removed from the *Umwelt* leaving as it were a blank spot. The sheep wonder where the object, a fellow member of the herd, went and when taking into consideration that sheep are indeed social gregarious animals, readers may assume that such animals would notice and wonder about the absence of a herd member. In fact, the author goes further and writes that the sheep when noticing the absence of some of the herd try to imitate their shepherd to whom it was enough to count the sheep in order to see if they were all there (Swann 2006: 76-77). He apparently did not have closer ties to one particular sheep and knowing the correct number of the individuals in his herd satisfied him. To the sheep numbers do not mean anything, because numbers are not objects in their *Umwelten*. Other sheep are meaningful objects and belong to the functional cycles of social interaction, like grooming, mating, and communication. The sheep *Umwelt* actually only makes sense to the sheep if there are other individuals of its kind in it. A single sheep seems to be an impossibility. During the course of the story some of the sheep, Miss Maple, Othello and Mopple the Whale venture on their own trails for a short time, and learn to interpret different environments like the village through making them part of their *Umwelt*. This is partially done by means of comparison. Mopple seeks shelter under a large tree that reminds him of a barn (Swann 2006: 80) therewith attaching meaning of a known currently absent object to an unknown present one. Miss Maple faced the more challenging task of attaching meaning to human language and actions. She does that by comparing humans to other animals and to the literary characters known to her through George's reading. Othello tries to make sense of a funeral in a graveyard. His olfactory sense reveals what sort of place a graveyard is and that the funeral is George's, who is buried "in a box" (Swann 2006: 83). Smells additionally convey that the humans present at the funeral are not sad but exited. His visual perception creates the image of a garden because the place is orderly, but his experience of a life in a circus before George rescued him provides him with the memory of a pit where dead animals were disposed of. These incidents of sheep exploring the surroundings on their own and their forming new relations in

their *Umwelt* are the catalysts for the readers to ponder about their own relations to certain places like a graveyard. A tree as shelter, humans compared to animals, and graveyards as strange gardens are after all not far away from human experience if it remains on a personal level and ignores education, for example about how to behave at a funeral. Some readers may even have experienced the same sensation that visitors at a funeral are not necessarily sad, but humans are not able to determine such an impression through olfactory clues.

After the discovery of George's death the story goes on by declaring how the sheep try to stay in a distance to their dead shepherd because of the smell of his blood. Slowly the author builds a sheep *Umwelt* based on their perceptions of and interactions with it. There are two other animals present at the discovery of George's body, a crow and a rabbit. The crow "was studying his [*i.e.* George's] internal arrangements with professional interest" (Swann: 11), a somewhat bizarre remark that provokes a silent laughter or smirk in the readers. It makes perfect biological sense though. In the crow's *Umwelt* George's body is a smell-emitting corpse with signs of food. It belongs to the crow's functional cycle of foraging and the crow has no other signs attached to it. What was once a living individual has completely disappeared from the crow's *Umwelt* if it has ever been a part of it. The rabbit does not perceive the object of George's body at all. If it smells blood or decay, it is not bothered by the smell. Even though humans share the same senses with sheep and most other mammals, it comes to no surprise that olfactory and auditory sensing is essential for sheep. They are prey animals and rely on their senses to stay alive. They need to identify danger in their perceptual world (*Merkwelt*) in order to initiate the right processes for life conservation. Therefore, sheep use their olfactory and auditory senses much more than humans therewith having an advantage humans may either not be aware of or ponder on how significant the additional information is that sheep may retrieve. The investigation of the shepherd's body, that is an object in the perpetual world that is meaningful by means of interrelation to the sheep by which they can identify it clearly, is started by both looking at it and by smelling. It is the latter that establishes the death of the shepherd. It is the meaningfulness of the object *i.e.* the dead shepherd to the sheep that initiates the actions in the *Wirkwelt* (operational world). The sheep face many challenges related to their body design. They do not

have hands to investigate and pick things up. They rely on the functions of their hooves and muzzle. The process induced by the information retrieval is deduction that is identifying the right conclusion of given premises. The conclusion that the shepherd is dead because a spade is stuck in his body is wrong, but for example the conclusion that a sheep was present around the time of his death based on observing a fading hoof print on the shepherds body is correct. It is left to the readers whether they allow a high degree of intelligence to the sheep or not. Without a remarkable degree of intelligence a sheep could not deduct such a conclusion about a hoof print. The author actively supports the idea that one of the sheep, Miss Maple, is exceptionally clever. On the other hand, Swann also relies on the sheep's natural intelligence and capabilities that allow them to learn and survive. At one point Swann describes the functional cycle of escape from a predator accurately: "When a sheep thinks Wolf! Its proper course of action is to bleat and run away" (Swann 2006: 96). Once the object is perceived as a predator, the proper action is to flee from the object and warn fellow herd members. The sheep display this particular functional cycle several times. They take refuge when disturbed by humans, who could be predators of sheep. For George's only the butcher is a human object with predator signs, but other humans should not trigger the escape cycle. The author though remains truthful to the nature of her main characters and does not judge particular behaviour is inappropriate even if displayed at no eminent danger.

The act of grazing is from a human perspective rather mechanical and automatic exercise. Swann instead describes it as graceful and conscientious, the opposite of unspiritual. Not only is the intake of food the most fundamental effect for the sheep's survival, it provides them with individuality and freedom. When the sheep graze for the first time outside during the night they enjoy the new experience that was not possible when their shepherd was still alive and kept them inside during night time. On almost a whole page the author describes the different grasses and herbs each sheep likes Swann 2006: 99-100). In the description the individual *Umwelt* of each sheep is made visible to the readers in a subtle, inspiring way. Suddenly a grazing sheep is turned into an individual object with which the reader establishes an even closer relation. There is no doubt that the author has given her sheep both personality and a mind or soul. The sheep

debate whether humans have souls and have their doubts that they do, because the sheep believe the soul is situated in the nose. Swann obviously participates in the discussion about whether there is such an entity as 'soul' in humans and other animals, and if so where and how it could be located in a body. In his contribution "Animal Language And Thought" for "the shorter routledge encyclopedia of philosophy" (Craig, Edward ed., 2005. London and New York, Routledge) Dale Jamieson writes: "Cognitive ethology and comparative psychology have emerged as fields that study animal thought. While there are conceptual difficulties in grounding these fields, it appears plausible that many animals have thoughts and these can be scientifically investigated" (Craig 2005: 19). One will have to notice the very careful expression "it appears plausible". In his book on ecocriticism Greg Garrard point out how carefully scientist such as ethologist Konrad Lorenz avoided non-technical terms and anthropomorphic hypotheses in animal studies (Garrard, Greg 2012: Ecocriticism. London and New York, Routledge. P. 164-165). However, according to Garrard there are different kinds of anthropomorphism and some of them have proven useful in ethology, for example. He does not only see anthropomorphism as the "sentimental projection of human emotions onto animals" (Garrard 2012: 154) but argues that it would be impossible to describe animal behaviour at all without comparison to human behaviour. This is certainly true for a literary context like the one at hand where human language is the only way to describe animal behaviour including communication and animal appearance. Nobody would put scientific pressure on Leonie Swann to describe her sheep creations in scientific terms, but she felt herself obliged to keep a difference between the sheep and humans, and to draw an animal world fundamentally different from the human world based on perception, interpretation and action, in other words and to come back to *Umwelt* studies, based on very different functional cycles. Whether such entities as mind and soul are situated in the inner world (*Innenwelt*) that models the *Umwelt* remains a hypothetical question.

In his discussion on animal mind and semiotic self Timo Maran argues that zoosemiotician Thomas Sebeok preferred the term semiotic self for two reasons. The first reason is that such an entity as mind is difficult to define and to study. The second reason is the understanding of the semiotic self as a multilayered structure

that is not permanent but developing with its organism's life cycle and exterior circumstances (Maran, Timo 2010: Why Was Thomas A. Sebeok Not a Cognitive Ethologist? From "Animal Mind" to "Semiotic Self". In: Biosemiotics 2010, Volume 3 p. 315-329. Dordrecht, Springer.). The semiotic self does not have a location but is the result of the interpretation processes between inner world and Umwelt. It is impossible to share the views of the semiotic self, which is why research methods of zoo- or biosemiotics differ from those of cognitive ethology, where the aim is to connect to the world of an animal, for instance. Maran points to von Uexküll's research as crucial for zoosemiotics and makes clear why it is an apt tool for the analysis of animal. He writes. "Based on Uexküll's Umwelt theory, the pluralistic approach would not strive towards any hierarchical understanding of animal communication systems but would rather emphasize and investigate their specific peculiarities in different Umwelten, individual histories and relations to the environment. In this framework ethical involvement in environmentalist debates should also be possible for zoosemiotics, but the starting point in such case would be emphasizing the value of animal life because of its uniqueness and difference as well as mutual involvement in semiotic networks rather than solidarity based on resemblance or empathy" (Maran 2010: 327). The example of grazing sheep underlines Maran's point and links it to this thesis. The sheep are described in their own *Umwelten*, they do not resemble humans in neither their looks nor their activities. The common characteristics are individuality and capabilities tied to both their own species and individual history. There is no denying that at times the sheep in "Three Bags Full" are described from an anthropocentric point of view but there is no reason to keep this the sole possibility of interpretation.

Another peculiarity in addition to the procedure of food intake in sheep *Umwelten* is the olfactory sense. It is very much the nose that determines whether the sheep like a certain human individual or not. The butcher smells appropriately of death, of "screams, pain and blood" (Swann 2006: 17), so that even the dogs are afraid of him. This discloses the information that sheep can smell a lot of things humans cannot and that other animals like the dogs in this case share this ability. It is this semiotic difference of the same senses where the sheep get more and explicit information that separates animals from humans, and on top of that creates a good part of the fascination humans have with the animal world and their

perception. Again the author uses the opportunity to show the difference between sheep and human from within the sheep *Umwelt*. Miss Maple ponders when deprived of the smell of humans she observes through a window that her discomfort must be constant “for human beings, with their small souls and their sticking-out noses. It meant distrust. Uncertainty. *Anxiety*” (Swann 2006: 146, original italic). The assumption is correct, as there are distrust, uncertainty and anxiety among the human of Glennkill. It is not only the nose though that fails the humans, but their selfishness and inability to communicate with each other create the gloomy atmosphere in the village.

Since sheep are prey animals the blood they smell is most likely their own or that of a fellow herd member. The humans cannot perceive the butcher’s smell but they nevertheless know perfectly well what he is doing. The readers will most likely attach negative connotations to the object ‘butcher’, because he is a certain person with a name and a face in opposite to modern slaughterhouses where killing is to such an extent automated that it would be hard to point to a single person responsible for the animals’ death. Cunningly the author makes the plan of building such a modern facility in Glennkill partially responsible for the murder committed. The inhabitants of Glennkill are against the slaughterhouse because it would ruin their businesses and not because it is inhumane to animals. Again, the process from lamb to mutton as discussed earlier is pushed out of the human perception and consciousness to be replaced with concern for themselves only.

The sheep are quite distinctive from human characters. On the level of language the author uses words such as ‘bleat’, ‘grunt’ to describe the sounds of the animals, and ‘woolly’ and ‘dappled’ for their looks, therewith creating a real-life impression of the sheep. These words make it clear that sheep communication is different from human natural language in both auditory and expressive term. Obviously other sheep are important to each individual in its *Umwelt*, because they are gregarious animals that need their herd in order to survive and thrive. In addition to communication the author meticulously describes actions such as grazing to help the readers understand the behaviour and functions of sheep. Another behaviour that distinguishes the sheep from humans is their somatic proximity. Grooming in all its forms builds and reinforces the relations between

individuals. Nibbling another sheep's ear, muzzling its rump or licking its face are examples the author uses to demonstrate both the importance of somatic effects a sheep object would trigger in a subject to maintain relations and the virtue of the herd to each individual. The humans on the other hand do not at all show any somatic interaction and in fact choose a distant stance to each other. The very few instances where humans use touch are to drag away, push or pull. There is no gentleness in somatic actions, which is in stark contrast to the sheep's physical interactions.

### III 2. The humans and *Umwelt* of "Three Bags Full"

Humans play only a secondary part in the novel but are ultimately a considerable piece of the world of sheep, because they decide over the animals' fate. Therefore the readers are given a description and analysis of the human world from inside the sheep's *Umwelten*, that is to say what signification the sheep attach to human objects. This peculiar view may well be the foundation of the novel's extraordinary success. Being perceived and assessed by another life form than the human one is challenging yet compelling for readers. At the same time a glimpse into other *Umwelten* is most fascinating.

There are not many relations between the sheep and humans. The only human they had a strong relation to and that was the intersection between their and the human world was their shepherd George. This tie is severed on the first page because George is dead. That the relationship between the sheep and George was special is underline by a quote from Miss Maple: "Hardly any humans ever used to come up here. Except for George, of course, but he wasn't really a human, he was our shepherd" (Swann 2006: 85). In this quote the anthropocentric notion of all sheep in a flock looking quite alike is turned into a version of all humans looking the same to sheep. That George and his relation to his sheep were special is made clear in a quote from Melmoth that supplements the *Umwelt* concept almost perfectly: "He [George] walked through many worlds, he was a guest in many world" (Swann 2006: 201). The shepherd definitely had by far a better idea about

the *Umwelten* of his sheep than any other human in the story. It is the author's aim to bring her readers closer to his ability and develop an understanding for the sheep world.

The humans that turn up at the pasture after George's death are new objects for the sheep and hence new relations have to be formed. During the course of the murder mystery another shepherd, Gabriel, tries to lure the sheep into a relation with him. Due to the encounter with Gabriel's own unfortunate herd the sheep of George make Gabriel an object with negative signification and try to avoid him. At the end of the story the sheep are about to form a relation to their new shepherdess, Rebecca, who first of all smells like her father which helps the sheep to attach meaning to her and who continues his habit to read to the herd. In addition, the secretive Melmoth encounters Rebecca before any other sheep and he muses while observing her arriving in Glennkill: "Fancy leaving the tarmac without fluttering her eyelashes or rolling her eyes! Most humans hesitate before stepping off their roads. They're suspicious, their feet are tender, as if the ground were full of holes to make them stumble, and their first steps are like walking through mud. The woman had left the road decisively, like a sheep following her nose. She was still following her nose now, clever as a sheep as she made her way towards the village. She hadn't let the road lead her astray" (Swann 2006: 112-113). Melmoth notices the difference of sheep and human *Umwelt*. He very rightly uses the possessive pronoun 'their' in connection to tarmac roads and knows this is the path humans prefer. Following one's nose is not to be taken literally with humans but certainly should be with sheep. Rebecca is the only human in the story not hampered by her past or embittered by her experiences. She builds new connections in her *Umwelt* and strikes the readers as somebody who will make her way.

A crucial information is given to the readers on the first page is the setting for the story. It is made clear that it takes place in Ireland on a coastline (Swann 2006: 11). Since the only city mentioned is Dublin and the religion practiced by the locals is Catholicism it becomes clear that the story takes place in the Republic of Ireland. The coast line is described as rugged and the ocean as rather overwhelming the readers are led to assume that the village of Glennkill, the

fictional location of the story, is situated at the north-western coast. Additionally border guards are mentioned, which means it cannot be far to Northern Ireland. The environment given by the author is hence based on reality. Readers may share this reality to some extent by either having been in northwest Ireland themselves or having visited some other coastal place that would fit the depiction. Ireland is very popular with German tourists<sup>10</sup> and Swann can rely on many of her German readers having a notion of Ireland. Even if the readers were not in any place that could be compared to the western Irish coast, television, advertisements, and to a more and more influencing extend the Internet may have shaped an image of the place in the readers' minds. The fact that the village Glennkill is situated close to the border adds historical and political depths to the story and facilitates the crime scene. George's death is not a murder case, but George was in fact a criminal. He smuggled drugs, alcohol and other goods over the border using his sheep for his 'operation Polyphemus' (Swann 2006: 274) by attaching small packages to them under their fleece. The Cyclops in this case is local inspector Holmes, being much closer to Homer's one-eyed giant than to Conan Doyle's outstanding detective. He is bribed by the same people George works with and turns a blind eye on the smuggling. At the end of the story he is provided with evidence to improve his reputation and therefore like the butcher reconciled.

The readers notice a contrast of the tourist idyll that prevails in German people's minds according to a survey<sup>11</sup>, and the reality of the locals in their village as introduced in the novel. Despite George's wife Kate's claim "It's so beautiful here" (Swann 2006: 32), his daughter Rebecca reveals her thoughts on Glennkill in a different tone: "This is a strange place. It's not the way I imagined it. I thought it would be peaceful here." (Swann 2006: 147-148), underlining therewith the difference between imagination and relations to one's *Umwelt*. Just like the wicked village world of Miss Marple's adventures mentioned in chapter one, Glennkill's beautiful surroundings are corrupted by the activities of humans, who disturb their relations to both their *Umwelt* and other humans by their actions. Murder,

---

<sup>10</sup> According to a news paper article from 17.9.2015 half a million Germans visited Ireland in 2014:  
<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/reise/hippe-kleine-staedteschwester-cork-alles-in-butter-1.2629245>

<sup>11</sup> The survey done by Ireland.com:  
<http://www.ireland.com/news/umfrage-deutsche-sehen-irland-vor-allem-als-laendliches-idyll-1709201201/>

one could argue, is an unnatural event that causes disturbance, and in Glennkill both murder and suicide have taken place.

The few relations between humans revealed in the story are either family ties or some sort of business related. George was married but obviously cheated his wife Kate, because his daughter is obviously not the child of Kate. It becomes clear that none of the other villagers was a friend of George's and interestingly enough the local butcher seems to be first affected the most by the passing of the shepherd. Toward the end of the novel Ham, the butcher, makes peace with the sheep by not trying to get them off Rebecca. He, in fact, believes that a bit of George's spirit or soul could be within the sheep. Hence it would be impossible for him to slaughter them in any case. Ham is a tragic figure because he does not have any friends either and after George's death the only person he had some sort of relationship with is gone. To make things worse he has an accident while secretly visiting George's pasture after the death occurred and his legs become paralysed.

George's relations to other humans establish the sheep's point of view that he is a loner and his main if not only function is to care for them. Hence Miss Maple's notion that he was not really human but a shepherd is both true and uncomfoting. The reason for that being that George was indeed an important object in every sheep's *Umwelt* where their perception and actions were very much tied to him. Unfortunately for George he was not very important in most human's *Umwelt* with respect to him as an individual. Because of the past events and his behaviour, some humans feared him or thought it best to leave him alone. George did his part to support these notions. The only person who really cared about George is Beth, the missionary. She claims herself at the end of the story that her biggest crime was not to have told George that she was actually in love with him (Swann 2006: 333). The readers are left to ponder whether such a confession would have changed much. George must have noticed Beth's feelings for him, because he reveals his suicide plan to her and ensures her support. In his *Umwelt* her signification was that of a helper, but she obviously was not the object of George's cycle of sexual attraction or particular affection.

### III.3 Animals in non-natural *Umwelten*

The novel "Three Bags Full" does not only introduce animals in almost natural environments but demonstrates animal struggle in non-natural places out of which animals have to construct their *Umwelten*. The examples of the circus and the church are used to emphasise human-made places where animals are abused for entertainment or a demonstration of power. Despite its conditions for the sheep to provide them with food and shelter, not even the pasture is a natural environment. It is fenced in, there are buildings and other human-made elements, and George has confined a small garden in the pasture to prevent the sheep from access to it. The opposite to the tradition of pastoral idyll introduced in chapter one is marked by the condition of a pasture as imprisonment when the shepherd Gabriel builds an enclosure for his own sheep on George's pasture. Gabriel is even less interested in the sheep roaming freely for a purely economic reason. His sheep are bred for meat production. He does not allow them to extend their environment beyond a very restricted area. What happens to these sheep's *Umwelt*-concept is a reduction to one single functional cycle, the one of eating. They do not even forage since they cannot move and food is almost constantly provided to fatten them. Even when they are still alive Gabriel's sheep have turned from living animal individuals to pieces of mutton. George's sheep first fail to establish a connection to them at all. Zora tries but all she sees is "a flickering light" in their eyes and she feels like looking into an abyss when looking into their eyes (Swann 2006: 119). Later on one of Gabriel's sheep tells Zora that he and his whole flock are meat, fodder for the human (Swann 2006: 221). He describes how shepherd Gabriel uses fences and dogs to contain his herd, and build a fence of fear that they cannot overcome. Zora and her flock are shocked about this revelation and many readers will feel uneasy. They are reminded of humans being the predator of animals, exploiting them by killing (Martinelli 2007: 225). At this point the lamb is sacrifice again, a sacrifice to human needs. Later on in the story the butcher muses on whether his occupation is a sin but concludes that animals are slaughtered even in the Bible. The readers are left to try and find an answer to the question whether humans should be predator of animals.

Gabriel is immediately exposed by the experienced Othello, who “recognized an animal tamer at once: the same few gestures, the same boredom in the eyes. The same malice behind that deceptive friendliness” (Swann 2006: 114). Due to his personal experiences in a zoo and a circus Othello has given humans a much more varied and sinister signification in his *Umwelt* where humans caused both positive and negative response functional cycles. He is the lead ram in a decisive moment when the sheep choose a new shepherd. Othello prefers Rebecca, George’s daughter to Gabriel and pulls the flock with him (Swann 2006: 266). That move saves all the sheep’s lives.

Shepherd George rescued Othello from a circus where he was forced to fight dogs. He originally came from Dublin zoo and had therefore never any nature-like environment suitable for sheep before he was taken to Glennkill. Zoos are according to Armstrong places that exhibit animals torn from their ecosystems (Armstrong, Philip 2008: *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*. London and New York, Routledge. P. 174-175). This can be read as animals taken out of their natural environment and forced to model an *Umwelt* based on inadequate premises, because its inner world is partially based on other than experience derived codes and therefore not suitable for zoos. Zoos, to put it bluntly, are there to cater for human needs and not for animals. Swann even writes that some animals in the zoo, mostly sheep, were fed to beats of prey without any concern of those chosen as prey, because they were not perceived as individuals with a right to their own lives (Swann 2006: 108).

Instead of building his *Umwelt* around his needs and opportunities of interaction for his own well-being, Othello had to focus on one single issue: surviving. In the zoo he was prone to become prey for other animals and in the circus his life was at stake every single day in a completely unnatural way. He was trained first by an alcoholic, a man appropriately named Lucifer Smithley (Swann 2006: 108), who used “sugar and hunger and stealthy torment” as training methods (Swann 2006: 114). These methods are not too far away from those described by Paul Bouissac in his work on the circus (Bouissac, Paul 1976: *Circus and Culture. A Semiotic Approach*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London.). Bouissac points out that after the selection of an appropriate animal the

trainer may use training methods that contain both pleasant and unpleasant codes. Unpleasant codes are tactile and auditory coercion, and blows (Bouissac 1976: 53). In some circus acts animals perform as superior to humans, but in the end it is the skill, and hence the superiority of the trainer that is presented to the spectators. As Bouissac writes: "... the applause at the end of the act is for the man as trainer" (Bouissac 1976: 62). The connection between the animal and the spectator is broken at last. Othello was forced to perform tricks with Smithley, for example a knife-throwing act where the tamer would every now and then miss the target, but because of Othello's thick, black fleece nobody notices the bleeding sheep. In the scene when Othello visits the village church and has his encounter with the local priest, he compares Jesus on the cross to a victim of a knife-throwing act and therewith to himself (Swann 2006: 155). Othello was passed on from Smithley to the cruel clown of the circus and from him to the knacker, who forced Othello to fight against dogs and only by killing them was he able to guarantee another day to himself. At an early part of the story Othello uses his fighting skills to protect the herd from an attacking dog (Swann 2006: 49) and it is made clear how unnatural his behaviour is. Instead of a functional cycle of flight, he is the only sheep that uses the cycle of attack. His experience in a fully human environment where nature is completely excluded shows how ill animals are adapted for such places and their operations. The author uses Othello's fate to demonstrate how unjustified the use of animals for the purpose of entertainment without any concern for the creature actually is.

The village church is another entirely non-animal *Umwelt*. Othello, who enters it once, compares it based on his personal experience to a circus rink. Both the circus and the church trigger a functional cycle of perceiving, avoiding or confronting danger. In the church Othello is in fact a part of a peculiar performance, so to speak, namely confession. He listens to the village priest, a very unpopular, miserable and almost appalling character. Swann quite openly criticises the Catholic Church for taking care of neither humans nor animals. The priest refers to the sheep as 'dumb animals' and suggests to slaughter them when their shepherd is found that, because sheep without a shepherd, i.e. without guidance and control, are unthinkable. Apparently he sees himself as the shepherd of the villagers but none of them really trusts him or deems him important. It is the

establishment of the church that keeps the system running. The villagers, besides George, go to church service on Sunday and play act devote, but are in fact the opposite. Othello is a black ram with four horns. During the ominous confession performance with its very strict semiotic code, the priest mistakes Othello for the devil and henceforth has a personal nemesis. The open criticism of the church is part of the author's criticism of human attitude in general where greed, selfhood, envy, and insensibility rule over any positive characteristics. The church and the circus are made the same place in an instance where Othello perform with the clown in the circus rink: "Why does the sheep have to work at Christmas, a child's voice asked. It's unjust! A woman laughed. Of course it's just. God made animals to serve human beings. That's the way it is" (Swann 2006: 110). Some readers may think that this statement is outdated to some extent, but Armstrong argues that literature still has a duty to bring animals and humans closer to each other or as he puts it: "... we are especially in need of narratives that attempt translation between the animals we are and the animals we aren't" (Armstrong 2008: 225). By showing the very different *Umwelten* and characteristics of sheep and humans Leonie Swann has answered Armstrong's call.

Melmoth, the twin brother of Sir Ritchfield, is the only sheep that willingly disappeared. He was not content with living comfortable with the herd and its shepherd on the pasture, but he wanted to experience more. Swann on some occasions uses Melmoth's voice to narrate the story whenever an observation of the human world from an animal Umwelt is needed. These occasions are marked in italic type in the novel and read like a stream of consciousness or interior monologue<sup>12</sup>. The readers are invited to ponder whether Melmoth could only learn about humans and their *Umwelten* because he left his flock and broke free of the perhaps limiting sheep *Umwelten*. During his adventures he meets Othello and basically saves his life. During the night of George's death he reappears on the pasture, guiding Othello, the other sheep and even Rebecca to some extent through the change. He teaches the sheep to observe properly now that they cannot rely on their shepherd anymore. The awareness of the sheep increases parallel to the loss

---

<sup>12</sup> This is a reference to James Joyce's "Ulysses" for both the narrative mode and the similarity between Ulysses and Melmoth.

of their innocent and carefree life. At the end of the story Melmoth continues on his own trail. He is the ultimate example for every living organism being an individual. Despite being a gregarious animal he prefers not to live in a herd. It is perfectly acceptable that there are individuals among animals that behave differently from the other individuals of their species and to some degree odd in comparison to what is expected of them. Just like his more sinister literary example, Melmoth remains the mythic and magical being somewhere on the edge of sheep and human *Umwelt*.

### III.4 Differences and common ground

There is no verbal communication between animals and humans in the novel. Some human characters say something to the sheep, but they obviously receive no response and the sheep do not always understand. The reason why the herd of George Glenn is able to make some sense of human language is based on their relatively tight connection to their shepherd and his reading books to them. Additionally there is no common language between animal species. The sheep do not understand other animals at all. There is one exception, the peculiar Melmoth. He seems to be able to communicate with birds at least. This aspect is only revealed to the readers, who may assume based on his very different life compared to the herd as mentioned early, that he either acquired skill and knowledge during his adventures that are mainly unknown to the readers. Melmoth may also just be the exception. They exist in both the human and the animal sphere, and a bit of magic and wonder should be allowed to remain when analysing animals no matter how close to reality the author and her story try to be.

Body language is a possibility of communication between different species. George and Zora have a moment of understanding expressed by the shepherd looking and his sheep and grinning after he failed to persuade her off her cliff. One of his persuasion tactics was to throw sheep dropping at her and when his missiles hit people on the beach below George feels contempt and is happy that Zora enabled his prank. Since he has to go on the ground on all four in order to look down from the cliff, he is suddenly able to admire Zora's ability to navigate the

steep rocks without problems. He also has to admit his failed attempt to tame and train her. George used the sure-footed sheep to hide a key on the cliffs where humans could not reach it, but unlike a dog the sheep does not always obey. Zora is like Melmoth an example that the sheep can and will live without their shepherd, and are quite different from pet animals like dogs and cats. Perhaps this independence from a human object not matter how central in their *Umwelten* led George to the decision to take a risk and leave their future up to their own decision as he declares in his will that the sheep are to decide themselves who is going to own them. It would appear that George thought that was somehow possible for the sheep to achieve and hence he must have had a good understanding of his animals. The author was certainly aware of the risk that her readers would deem this execution of freewill of the animals as somewhat naïve and not possible in the real world. One could argue though that the shepherd was the only one to have a look into their *Umwelten* and did therefore see that the sheep create relations all by themselves without the need for guidance. The readers are at least convinced that George was not interested in his sheep turning into mutton or any other commodity.

As there is no common language between species the challenge is to try and understand the *Umwelten* of other beings in order to understand their needs, behaviour, and possibilities. Some environments, the aquatic environment for instance, pose a challenge for humans to understand. Whereas there are mammals like seals and dolphins which cope brilliantly in aquatic environments, humans are less well adapted to the task. Nevertheless, humans perceive water in all its manifestations in their *Umwelten*.

In addition to observation the sheep in the novel learn about humans from books. George has the habit to read to the sheep. His preferred reading matters are books about sheep, their keeping, health, diet and so forth, and penny dreadful. While reading George often explains terms and concepts. It is obvious that he tries to understand them himself and uses his audience to form suitable explanations. One of the sheep, Cordelia, another bow to Shakespeare, is particularly fond of complicated words and fascinated by human language. Also Miss Maple would wish that she could use language to be understood by humans, but their shepherd

is not really a wordsmith. Since he grew up in the remote countryside and became an agricultural worker, his education is limited. This is expressed by his choice of literature in contrast to his daughter's choice of, for instance, Emily Brontë.

The question where from humans learn about sheep arises. George has the personal contact and searches for knowledge about sheep diseases, care, and races in books. All other humans, including shepherd Gabriel, apparently rely on their own ideas and common ideas, such as sheep eating grass and needing protection, but also delivering milk, meat and wool. These humans hang on to the stereotype of sheep at their role as predator or parasite of animals (Martinelli 2007: 225). Only George and Rebecca have a relationship of partner of the sheep. In such a relationship, according to Martinelli, the human may be the host of a guest animal, a pet for example. George's sheep are his pets; he does not keep them for economic reasons despite their involvement in the smuggling.

Another challenge the novel poses to the reader is that of the meaning of death. The sheep understand immediately that their shepherd is dead, but additionally they come to the conclusion that he died in a violent way suggesting the participation of an outsider. While the sheep are George's possession and taken care of, they experience violent deaths nonetheless. First of all they identify the butcher as an object with the sign of 'enemy' in their *Umwelt* based on his smell. Secondly it is mentioned that George would try to find the culprit when a lamb was killed by a dog (Swann 2006: 14), therefore the sheep must have witnessed killing. When the sheep find their shepherd with a spade stuck in his body they assume he was murdered. Miss Maple, the clever sheep, has a doubt already on page 25 of the novel. She was the one examining George's body closely and detected flowers in his fingers. George was not particularly interested in flowers and it strikes her as strange that he had some in his hands when he died. On top of that George's smell elsewhere than close to the wound is not unpleasant and his face looked peaceful instead of being distorted by fear and agony. Even though Miss Maple does not rely on her observation but continues to search for the murderer, the police are not smarter than the sheep and all humans believe George's was murdered. Miss Maple benefits from her intuition like her literary prototype female detective Miss Marple and both are usually not taken serious by others except their close friends.

Also Miss Maple faces the scepticism of her herd at times when she tries to understand the relations of subjects and objects in human *Umwelten*. The readers may assume that suicide has no meaning in a sheep's *Umwelt* whereas death certainly has. When the sheep get to know that George has killed himself they are puzzled. They cannot understand why he had committed suicide and need the explanation of a sheep more experienced in human *Umwelten*. This sheep is Fosco, the regular winner of the annual 'Smartest Sheep of Glennkill'-contest and he tells the sheep: "They [the human] look at the world and decide they don't want to live" (Swann 2006: 337). Fosco obviously has spent more time with humans and in man-made surroundings. His adaptation even goes so far as to develop a human habit, because this particular sheep seems to be addicted to alcohol.

Despite the sheep not understanding the concept of suicide, they are not angry with George either, because a new object in their *Umwelten* has taken the signification of shepherd, George's daughter Rebecca. Humans suffer from another person's suicide as the examples of Rebecca and Beth show. Especially Beth is a tragic character, because it is hard to see how she could go on without any meaningful object in her *Umwelt* as she does not have any ties to the village and its people after George's passing. Rebecca reconnects with her dead father through his sheep and at the end of the book it seems each sheep is becoming a meaningful object to her. Even butcher Ham, who was punished cruelly for both being the butcher and being coward, changes his perception of sheep. Whereas he at first sees nothing but pieces of meat and bones in animals (Swann 185), he later believes that the sheep have something of George in them (Swann 2006: 344). Based on this belief and his disability it is made clear that Ham will not continue with his profession. Therefore both the sheep and the readers are invited to forgive this individual. However, the readers are left with the problem of animal exploitation as mentioned earlier on the examples of both productive livestock and abuse for entertainment.

One challenging and difficult issue touched upon in the novel is the perception of death of both human and sheep. As already mentioned, sudden and violent deaths of their kind are known to the sheep as well as is disease. Their dead shepherd obviously unsettles them and urges them to solve the mystery around

his passing. The sheep recognise the smell of death as is illustrated on the example of the smell of George's body and the smell the butcher emits. There is one flaw though in the story. Sir Ritchfield is convinced that his twin brother Melmoth was killed during his escape but the pursuers George and Ham did not kill the sheep. Instead they found a human killed secretly which marks the start of George's decline and the downfall of the whole village. This flaw may not be one after all. It could suggest that death makes all objects of an *Umwelt*, no matter whether animal or human, equal. This is the ultimate common ground of all living beings. Once an individual is dead, all signification attached to it vanishes into memory.

### III.5 The *Umwelt* of dogs

The only other animal into which's *Umwelt* the readers have a glance in the novel is George's sheepdog Tessy. She is mentioned in the first chapter when Miss Maple wonders where she is. With the death of the shepherd his dog disappeared and is only brought back to her place in the last chapter. It turns out that George had brought his dog to the shelter before he committed suicide. His daughter Rebecca retrieves the old dog and takes care of her. Swann writes: "Her [Rebecca] hand gently patted Tessy's head, and Tess wagged her tail very slightly. You could see it was the first wag of her tail for a long time. One morning Rebecca had brought Tess back in a car. Tess had strange, sad eyes. She didn't go racing over the meadow as usual. She didn't leap around the caravan looking for George either. Tess disappeared in Rebecca's shadow and followed her red skirt everywhere, like a very young lamb following its mother" (Swann 2006: 347-348). George's betrayal of the dog is much more severe than that of the sheep, because the dog's *Umwelt* is centred on its human partner. Tess used her senses to perform George's orders and made sense of the actions and processes through these orders. Her pack was George; she was closer to his *Umwelt* than to that of the sheep through their co-operation and her emotional attachment to her human keeper. Von Uexküll's training method for dogs mentioned earlier shows how well dogs adapt to the human way of understanding *Umwelt*.

The story would have presented a different *Umwelt* were it written from the perspective of the sheep dog. George's sheep cope well after his death because they are taking care of by a new shepherdess and because they have each other in the herd. Tessy formed a pack with George, and his suicide leaves her alone. Swann suggests that Tessy is now dependent on Rebecca and there is of course the possibility that the two of them will form an equal bond to that of the dog and George. In it remarkable in any case that the author shows the real tragedy of George's decision clearest on the example to his deserted dog. She is the only one that never disappointed George as all the humans have. This is not to claim that George would not have been partly responsible for his failed relationships to what should have been his herd – his wife, daughter, friends, neighbours, and so on. His dog was dependent on him emotionally but it was not enough to make George want to continue to live. The quote "Tessy, George's old sheepdog, his most faithful companion, the one real love of his life" (Swann 2006: 25) contradicts George's decision to abandon her. He would have needed a human in his *Umwelt* to share all emotions, expectations, hopes, and fears. The readers are left to ponder their and every human's responsibility to consider and care for both the humans and animals in their immediate *Umwelt* but also on an extended, perhaps even global, scale.

## Summary

The aim of this thesis is to introduce a new way of analysing literature with a focus on animals. Instead of labelling the animals as humans in disguise, symbols or metaphors, they should retain their qualities as real animals. The stereotypical image of sheep has a long tradition as was shown in chapter one.

Leonie Swann took on the difficult task to write a crime story from the perspective of sheep. In addition to the stereotypical idea of sheep not being particularly clever and in need of protection, sheep are productive livestock and therefore not very close to human concern. Swann remains true to her animals and does not use them as a replacement for humans or as mere symbols of innocence, for instance. The readers are offered the challenge and opportunity to identify with the sheep and take their perspective.

The *Umwelt* research of Jakob von Uexküll focuses on how organisms experience the world around them, the world where certain objects have meaning and others have not. To analyse animals on the bases of how they perceive and act in their *Umwelten* keeps the focus on the animals and moves away from anthropocentrism as the only tool for analysis.

The analysis of the sheep's perception, actions and behaviour in their *Umwelt* in the novel "Three Bags Full" shows that realistic animals have a place in literature and should be analysed as animals and not only fictitious inventions. Even when taking the artistic licence of the author into consideration it is obvious that Swann paid detailed attention to the biology of her sheep characters, their restrictions and possibilities. It is clear that the sheep are fundamentally different from humans and in the novel there are only two humans who understand them altogether. The author, however, shows that sheep are wonderful creatures and their *Umwelten* are by no means worth less than those of humans.

Not even the very attentive biologist Jakob von Uexküll was able to solve all mysteries of animal *Umwelten*. His wife Gudrun von Uexküll writes in her

biography of her husband that a white cockerel insisted to arrange his resting place beside the desk of Uexküll even though many attempts were made to get the animal out of the house (Uexküll 1964: 184). No matter how much it is influenced, limited and enabled by its species-specific characteristics, each animal remains an individual with all its very own qualities and habits. Leonie Swann offers her readers a variety of different individuals to choose from and share their personal *Umwelt*.

To focus on the species-specific and individual traits that shape the organism's *Umwelt*, and the relations between organism and the objects of its *Umwelt* opens new doors to understanding animals in literature. With a zoosemiotic focus on animals literary analysis benefits from the distance to anthropocentrism without necessarily excluding a human point of view and offers an opportunity to come closer to other animals and their worlds.

## Works cited

- Abrams, M. H., Greenblatt, Stephen (eds) 2001: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York and London, W. W. Norton & Company.
- Armstrong, Philip (2008): *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Bouissac, Paul (1976): *Circus and Culture. A Semiotic Approach*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London.
- Büttner, Frank / Gottdang, Andrea (2006): *Einführung In Die Ikonographie. Wege zur Deutung von Bildinhalten*. München, C.H. Beck.
- Clark, Timothy (2011): *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Cobley, Paul (ed.) 2010: *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Fudge, Erica (2002): *Animal*. London, Reaktion Books.
- Garrard, Greg (2012): *Ecocriticism*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Gaschke, Susanne (2002): *Hexen, Hobbits und Piraten. Die besten Bücher für Kinder*. Stuttgart/München, Deutsche Verlags-Gesellschaft.
- Günter, Wolfgang (2007): *Taube, Löwe, Kreuz und Anker*. Wuppertal, R. Brockhaus.
- Irmscher, Johannes (ed.) 2011: *Sämtliche Fabeln der Antike*. Köln, Anaconda.
- Kerridge, Richard and Sammells, Neil (1998): *Writing the Environment*. London And New York, Zed Books Ltd.
- Kull, Kalevi (2010): *Umwelt and Modelling*. In: Cobley, Paul (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Laaths, Erwin (1988): *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*. Bindlach, Gondrom.
- Maran, Timo et al. eds (2011): *Readings in zoosemiotics*. Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter Mouton.
- Martinelli, Dario (2010): *A critical companion to zoosemiotics*. Dordrecht, Springer.
- Martinelli, Dario (2007): *Zoosemiotics: Proposals for a handbook*. Imatra, Acta Semiotica Fennica.
- Morgan, Janet (1984): *Agatha Christie. A Biography*. London, Collins.

- Nöth, Winfried (2000): Handbuch der Semiotik. Stuttgart und Weimar, Metzler.
- Nusser, Peter (1992): Der Kriminalroman. Stuttgart, Metzler.
- O'Connor, Evangeline (1996): Who'S Who And What'S What In Shakespeare. New York and Avenel, Gramercy Books.
- Der Physiologus. Tiere und ihre Symbolik. 2005. Köln, Anaconda.
- Schenda, Rudolf (1995): Das ABC der Tiere. München, Beck.
- Simek, Rudolf (1984): Lexikon der germanischen Mythologie. Stuttgart, Kröner.
- Sebeok, Thomas A. (1972): Perspectives in Zoosemiotics. The Hague, Mouton.
- Sebeok, Thomas A. (1975): Zoosemiotics: At the Intersection of Nature and Culture. Lisse, The Peter De Ridder Press.
- Sova, Dawn B. (1996): Agatha Christie A To Z. The Essential Reference to Her Life and Writings. New York, Facts On File.
- Stanzel, Franz K. (1993): Typische Formen des Romans. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Swann, Leonie (2007): Three bags full. London, Black Swan.
- Swann, Leonie (2005): Glennkill. Ein Schafskrimi. München, Goldmann.
- Tarasti, Eero (2000): Existential Semiotics. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press.
- Uexküll, Gudrun von (1964): Jakob von Uexküll seine Welt und seine Umwelt. Hamburg, Christian Wegner Verlag.
- Uexküll, Jakob von (1980): Kompositionslehre der Natur. Frankfurt, Ullstein.
- Uexküll, Jakob von, Kriszat, Georg (1983): Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen & Bedeutungslehre. Frankfurt, Fischer.
- Uexküll, Jakob von (2010): A foray into the world of animals and humans. Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press.
- Wilpert, Gero von (1989): Sachwörterbuch der Literatur. Stuttgart, Kröner.

[http://www.randomhouse.de/Autor/Leonie\\_Swann/p110362.rhd](http://www.randomhouse.de/Autor/Leonie_Swann/p110362.rhd)

Information about the author Leonie Swann by the publishing house Goldmann belonging to the Random House group.

[http://www.randomhouse.de/Die\\_Schafskrimis\\_von\\_Leonie\\_Swann\\_Glennkill\\_und\\_Garou/aid9707.rhd?mid=1159](http://www.randomhouse.de/Die_Schafskrimis_von_Leonie_Swann_Glennkill_und_Garou/aid9707.rhd?mid=1159)

Interview with Leonie Swann 3.11.2005 on her publisher's web site. Interview by L. Kohler © Bertelsmann Network, Gütersloh, Nov. 2005.

[http://www.randomhouse.de/Die\\_Schafskrimis\\_von\\_Leonie\\_Swann\\_Glennkill\\_und\\_Garou/aid9707.rhd?aid=9707](http://www.randomhouse.de/Die_Schafskrimis_von_Leonie_Swann_Glennkill_und_Garou/aid9707.rhd?aid=9707)

Interview with Leonie Swann on her publisher's web site web site by Elke Kreil.

<http://www.peta.de/progressawards2008#.VemeTs7BYfo>

PETA Germany Progress Award 2008.

<http://www.agathachristie.com/christies-work/detectives/miss-marple/3>

Homepage about the works of Agatha Christie including "Miss Marple".

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks07/0700551h.html>

<https://www.nabu.de/umwelt-und-ressourcen/oekologisch-leben/essen-und-trinken/07851.html>

Information about sheep husbandry in Germany today.

<http://www.schaf-foren.de/forum/index.php?act=Attach&type=post&id=125770>

Information about the history of sheep husbandry. Excerpt of Martin Wolf's diploma work.

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/animalidenficationandmovement/NationalSheepGoatCensus2013140514.pdf>

Statistics of sheep and goat husbandry in the Republic of Ireland in 2013.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/11365274/shaun-the-sheep-movie-aardman-behind-the-scenes.html>

Article in "The Telegraph" 24.1.2015 about the success and development of "Shaun the sheep".

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0007451725?keywords=450%20from%20paddington&qid=1440673284&ref=sr\\_1\\_4&s=books&sr=1-4#reader\\_0007451725](http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0007451725?keywords=450%20from%20paddington&qid=1440673284&ref=sr_1_4&s=books&sr=1-4#reader_0007451725)

Character list of "4:50 from Paddington" by Agatha Christie of the 2012 edition of Collins, London, on the web pages of Amazon UK.

<http://www.oscarwildesociety.co.uk/biography.html>

Biographic data of Oscar Wilde from the Oscar Wilde Society

[http://www.fischerverlage.de/buch/die\\_rote\\_zora\\_und\\_ihre\\_bande/9783737362597](http://www.fischerverlage.de/buch/die_rote_zora_und_ihre_bande/9783737362597)

Information about the youth novel "Die rote Zora und ihre Bande" and its author by the publishing house Fischer.

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/reise/hippe-kleine-staedteschwestern-cork-alles-in-butter-1.2629245>

Article from 17.9.2015 in the newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung about travelling in Ireland and specifically Cork.

<http://www.irland.com/news/umfrage-deutsche-sehen-irland-vor-allem-als-laendliches-idyll-1709201201/>

Ireland tourism site with information on how German tourists perceive Ireland.

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>

Online dictionary.

<https://stephencranesociety.wordpress.com/teaching/>

Information about the author Stephen Crane.

<https://www.perlentaucher.de/buch/leonie-swann/glennkill.html>

Collected reviews of "Three Bags Full" (in German language) by online cultural and literature magazine *Perlentaucher*.